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WISH VS THE WIND SOVTH.



DANIEL B. FEARING
NEWPORT R.I.

25.6.5. 1899



[HUGHES, WILLIAM.] FISH, HOW
CHOOSE AND HOW TO DRESS, by
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and Longmans. 1843. 16mo.

Crolier
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Dec. 1911

An early work on the special subject of fish cookery. The author gives as one of his reasons for presenting this work, that "in the most celebrated cook books, out of upwards of one hundred and several distinct species of good and wholesome fishes scarcely one-fourth part are mentioned even by name."

FISH,
HOW TO CHOOSE
AND
HOW TO DRESS.

~~~~~  
BY PISCATOR,  
AUTHOR OF "THE PRACTICAL ANGLER," ETC., ETC.

W: Hughes  
~~~~~

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1843.

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FISH:

HOW TO CHOOSE AND HOW TO DRESS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The object of writing the present work is to bring every kind of fish that is to be found in our waters and adapted for the food of man before the notice of the public. This, we must confess, is a task we could wish had been undertaken by abler hands, embracing, as it does, a subject that has been but partially treated on by the numerous, as well as talented writers who have from time to time favored us with their useful commentaries on the art of cookery.—As a proof of the limited extent to which this important subject has been restricted,

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we find, even in the most celebrated cookery books, that out of upwards of one hundred and seventy distinct species of good and wholesome fishes with which our markets are supplied, scarcely one fourth part are mentioned even by name: a very multitude of fishes, all excellent in their way at their proper times and seasons are altogether omitted, whilst several that are highly esteemed, and so common as to be easily attainable—all capable of being cooked in a variety of ways, each furnishing a dish the most fastidious epicure could not forbear to praise—are merely glossed over as unworthy of further notice.

In no less than six justly esteemed works on the subject, we have searched in vain for some remarks upon the merits of that most delicious of fishes, the john dory, but whose name we can find no-where mentioned: whilst the mighty ling—the largest and in our humble opinion the best of the whole cod tribe—is only alluded to as “a dried salt fish;” not one word being said about its edible qualities when fresh, though few fish are capable of being cooked in a greater variety of modes, or can be compared to a fresh ling in flavour in any one of them.

But it is not our intention to assail the able writers on the art of cookery for their omissions in the fish department; our sole object is to try as far as lies within our power and ability to supply them, and to furnish our readers with a sufficient stock of information to enable them to select, as also to prepare for the table, a most delicious as well as wholesome article of food, and one which now through the medium of our extensive railway communications, might with good management, and at no great expense, be distributed throughout the whole length and breadth of the land; by which means not only would the labouring and poorer classes receive a valuable augmentation to their humble fare at a cheap rate, but our fisheries—so important to us as a naval power, affording, as they do, the best nursery for seamen—would receive additional vigour by an increased demand for the produce of the hardy and industrious fishermen, which have been but too often found to lie almost as a dreg upon their hands, when supplied in great quantities; and thus oftentimes a valuable article of food is cast away to rot upon a dung-heap, that might have administered to the wants and comforts of hundreds of our starving fellow countrymen.

Much indeed then is it to be wished that the fish taken on our coasts could be better distributed throughout the country, and that all would lend their assistance to promote so desirable an end; for if there was only a demand, the supply, we are convinced, would not be long wanting—we are aware that there will be some prejudices to overcome, before the consumption will be so general as it ought to be, particularly among the humbler classes, who are very averse to vary their usual fare, whilst we all of us, rich as well as poor, are apt to think too lightly of those benefits that Providence bestows upon us with the most liberal hand: and thus it is, that many most excellent fishes are rejected by the more opulent classes, and are unthankfully eaten by the poor, for no other cause than the extreme ease and abundance with which the commodity can be supplied. This has been remarkably exemplified in the poor despised hake, which, until very recently, was never admitted to tables of the wealthy; though now its merits have begun to be more duly appreciated, and this fish, which formerly for its mere cheapness and plenty was scorned even by the poor, we have latterly had the gratification to see

gracing the tables of some of the aristocracy of the land.

This, among many instances, far too numerous to mention, convinces us how desirable it is that the qualities of all our fishes should be more generally known, as also their proper times and seasons; and the criterions by which, not only they may be distinguished from inferior kinds they closely resemble; but also such particular appearances as will denote with certainty the freshness and state and condition of the article. A knowledge of all these points must ever be of the greatest importance to the caterer of a family—one of the great causes why fish is not a more favorable article of diet, is owing to persons having partaken of it either when out of season, or from its being in a partial state of decomposition, from being too long or carelessly kept. The Salmon, which is justly styled the king of fishes, and entitled to vie if not surpass any of the scaly race when in its proper season, is one of the most disagreeable and unwholesome when out of condition—and when eaten stale is little better than poison. What indeed can be more delicious than a perfectly fresh mackarel, or more disgusting than one in the slightest degree

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tainted?—And the same observations are applicable to every other kind of fish we may chance to meet with; and which from their perishable nature, require the greatest care and attention to keep them in a sound state, even for a short space of time.

Here then arises another important point, viz. a knowledge of the different modes in which each different species may be best preserved, as well as cooked to the greatest possible advantage.—Few fish, indeed—except in frosty weather—can be kept good for above two or three days, at the utmost, without the assistance of salt or some other artificial aid.—Some indeed in warm weather become tainted even in the course of a single day after they are taken out of the water, though in many this may be prevented to a considerable extent, by removing the intestines within an hour or two after they are caught. This occurs particularly in the smaller species of the cod tribe; such as the whiting, or whiting-pout, as also in the haddock; as the livers of all these fishes contain a great quantity of oil, which in warm weather quickly imparts a rancid and disagreeable taste to the whole fish. Many other fishes also, that will be noticed hereafter, may be kept good a considerable time, parti-

cularly in moderate weather, after being gutted, which, if omitted, will cause the fish to become tainted in less than one half the time it would have done, had this necessary precaution been adopted.

Again, some fish that are excellent when salted and dried—as the torsk; or, even when only slightly powdered with salt for a day or two previously to their being dressed, as a whiting pollack for instance—are both watery, soft and insipid when cooked perfectly fresh; whilst in others the salt produces so contrary an effect as to extract every kind of flavour but its own; or what is worse, imparts a rank and disagreeable taste, as it almost invariably does when applied in any considerable quantity for the purpose of preserving soles, and most other species of flat fish, for any length of time. Some particular kinds of fishes, as mackarel, herrings, or pilchards, cannot possibly be brought to table too soon after being taken from their native element; on which account it falls to the lot of but very few to partake of either of these kinds of fishes in their greatest perfection: this occurs more particularly with pilchards than any kind of fish whatever, as they acquire an oily taste in the course of a few hours after death, which, though some may

admire, is very different from the fine curdy flavour they possess when just taken from the nets. In others again, as in all the scate tribe, there is a rank taste that is far more perceptible than pleasing, when they are dressed on the same day on which they are caught, yet, which wholly vanishes, if they are hung up in a cool place for a day or two.

Much also depends upon knowing in what way each particular fish may be cooked, so as to make its appearance to the greatest advantage; many there are that are unpalatable when dressed in one particular way, that are equally good if another mode of cookery be adopted—a stewed carp affords a really splendid dish; a boiled carp one of the worst that can be brought to table—the merits of a sur-mullet broiled, baked or fried, enveloped in white paper, with its liver for sauce, are too well known to require any comment from us, and yet, when simply boiled and gutted as you would a whiting, is a sad woolly and insipid affair; and the same observations hold equally in the case of a variety of other fishes we purpose fully treating of hereafter in their proper place.

With these preliminary remarks we shall at once proceed to our subject. First, by endea-

vouring to supply such practical directions as may afford the best assistance to enable our readers to distinguish the different kinds of fishes, with a few remarks on their respective merits as we proceed. The proper times and seasons, and the best criterions by which a sound and healthy condition may be most easily discovered—will then be discussed.

An attempt will next be made to point out the best modes of treatment for preserving fish, either for a long or short period—as the exigency of the case may require—and the various modes by which this may be effected—and last of all, to furnish all the information we can collect, as to the various modes by which each individual species may appear at table in the most favorable point of view, as well as the different sauces with which they should be accompanied; a subject by no means to be passed lightly over, and which no pains shall be wanting on our part to lay fairly before our readers.

CHAPTER II.

DIRECTIONS FOR CHOOSING FISH, WITH OBSERVATIONS UPON THEIR RESPECTIVE QUALITIES.

Fishes of the Cod kind.—There is no kind of fish more useful as an article of food, both for their wholesome qualities and agreeable flavour, than the whole of the cod tribe, of which no less than sixteen distinct species are to be met with on our coasts, and the greater part of them in considerable abundance. They are as follows, the common cod, speckled cod, haddock, pout, power cod, whiting, rawlin pollack, whiting pollack, green cod, hake, forked hake, ling, burbot, three bearded ling, five bearded ling, and the torsk: all of these, except the burbot, are natives of the sea, the latter being the only fish of the cod kind that inhabits our fresh waters. The flesh of all these fishes is white and divides into flakes. They are the most wholesome food that the sea sup-

plies us with, being innocent and easy of digestion, and on this account is permitted to be eaten by invalids in preference to any other kind of fish whatever.

The common Cod.—The common cod is taken on all parts of our coasts, but those most esteemed are caught on the Dogger bank.

There are two varieties of these fish, which may be distinguished from each other by the one having a sharp long nose extending to some distance beyond the eyes; whilst in the other the nose is short, blunt, and wide; the former is usually found of a darker colour than the latter, though the colour is often found to vary according to the food these fishes obtain, as well as the nature of the ground they inhabit; it being a well ascertained fact that most kinds of fishes have the chameleon like property of changing their tints and acquiring those of the soil over which they usually swim and inhabit, which seems a wise provision of Providence to assist them in concealing themselves in some degree from the numerous foes to whose attacks they are constantly liable, to which a strong contrast in colour would expose them. Hence it is that on several parts of our coasts, on rocky ground, cod are taken

even of a dark brown tint resembling that of the ore-weed growing on the rocky bottom, and when those weeds acquire a reddish cast, the same hue is also imparted to the fish inhabiting them; whilst those of the same kind that are taken on clean and sandy grounds at no very considerable distance, the upper parts are of the usual ashy green, the prevailing colour of the generality of cod fish; and on light coloured sandy ground some are found of a pale grey cast, even approaching to a milky whiteness; but these are seldom so well conditioned as those of a deeper tint, though the colour in a cod affords no certain criterion of its condition.

The cod attains a large size; instances having occurred of their weighing as much as sixty pounds; whilst Pennant records one taken on the Yorkshire coast, that weighed as much as seventy eight pounds; the length was five feet eight inches and the girth five feet, and it was sold at Scarborough for one shilling, thirty pounds is by no means an unusual size; but about twenty-five pounds may be taken as the usual average of an adult and well conditioned cod fish; and they are taken of all sizes varying from those above mentioned down to as small as three

or four ounces. Until these fish grow to a pound weight, they are usually called codlings; and from that weight to ten pounds they are called tamlin cod; and when they exceed the latter weight, acquire the right to be styled as cod fish. The larger cod however, if in good order, are generally the firmest and best flavoured fish, the smaller ones being often soft and watery, and the smaller they are to a greater degree does this prevail; still this may be removed to a considerable extent, by sprinkling salt over the fish a few days before they are cooked; and when salted and dried as salt fish, the moderate sized ones, or rather those that were but tamlin cod, are generally considered the best.

As a general rule the cod is a winter fish, coming in season in October and going out in February, and in its highest season about Christmas, at which time the females are full of roe, nor do they begin to decline 'till towards February, about which time some begin to deposit their spawn, at such times they become weak and emaciated, though they recover the effect of spawning quicker than most other fish; and as it always happens that some cast their spawn months earlier than others of their kind, a few may

be met with in tolerable order all through the year. This renders it highly important that a housekeeper should know how to select a healthy fish, which, if the rules we intend shortly to lay down are attended to, can very easily be obtained; and this knowledge is still more essential, as out of twenty cod fish exposed for sale, you will scarcely find two that are in equal condition with each other, and that some are not completely out of season as compared with the rest; whilst at other times only one out of the whole lot may be in a fit state for the table.

And now for choosing a cod, take care to select one that rises high and is round and thick about the poll, with a deep pit just behind the head; the body carrying its fullness well down towards the tail; the sides should appear as if ribbed; and the fish ought to be perfectly stiff, otherwise, whatever its condition may be, it will eat less firm. Stiffness is also a proof of freshness, as also the redness of the gills and the brightness of the eyes: both of which assume a pale dull cast as the fish becomes stale. Another mode of testing the freshness is to press your fingers on the body of the fish, when if it be stale the impression will remain; if fresh it will rise again on remo-

val of the pressure.

It seems that the cod caught in such immense quantities on the banks of Newfoundland, are a distinct species from those found on our own coasts, and according to Sir R. Bonnycastle, they are in every respect an inferior fish; not being, in his opinion, so good a fish as the rawlin pollack, or whiting coal—also found in great abundance on the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, as well as in the vicinity of our own shores—one that with us is held in very low estimation. 'The cod are exported from Newfoundland to this country dried, whilst the rawlin pollacks are sent over pickled in barrels.

The cod taken on our own coasts may be cured and cooked in a variety of ways, which will be duly noticed hereafter. A cod in prime order may be eaten to perfection when perfectly fresh; when a firm and delicious curd will be found between the flakes; but in proportion as the fish falls short in this respect, so will it be improved by being sprinkled with salt a few days before it is cooked.

The variable or speckled Cod.—This fish may be distinguished from the common cod, by the smallness of its head, and the lower

jaw being considerably shorter than the upper, as also in colour, which is a greyish brown interspersed with yellow or pale drab coloured spots. Its usual size is less than the common cod, it seldom exceeding nine or ten pounds; but it is an equally good fish, and has precisely the same flavour of an ordinary cod of the same size; and may be cured and cooked in precisely the same manner.

The Haddock.—The haddock bears some resemblance to the cod, but may be easily distinguished from it, by the black spot on each shoulder: said to be made by the finger and thumb of St. Peter, when he took the tribute money out of the mouth of this fish, which as a memorial of the miracle has been continued to the race of haddocks ever since. Be this as it may, the haddock is a most superior fish: its flesh is firm and is of a snow white colour, with a creamy curd between the flakes. It may be dressed either quite fresh or powdered, though it eats agreeably enough when salted either in pickle or dried. The larger the fish the firmer the haddock usually eats, though this will in a great measure depend upon its condition, as these fishes, particularly the larger ones, differ from each other in the same extent as the

common cod fish ; consequently equal care will be requisite in their selection. They do not attain so large a size as the cod ; the largest and best are said to be taken in Dublin bay, but in this respect we consider the coasts of Devon and Cornwall may fairly put in their claim for the palm : specimens being often taken on those coasts exceeding fourteen pounds weight, those of ten and twelve pounds at the proper season may constantly be met with ; whilst from two to four pounds is considered the common average of those supplied from other places to the London markets.

The larger haddocks keep much better than the smaller ones ; but both are likely to acquire a rancid taste from the oily nature of their livers, if permitted to remain long without being gutted ; which should never be delayed when the fish is to be kept for any length of time ; and although this might affect the appearance, it would tend much to preserve the soundness of the fish when it is transported to a distance ; as the pressure of package causes this unpleasant taint which may be wholly prevented by adopting the precaution above suggested.

The criterion of the healthy condition of a haddock, like that of the cod, is the thick-

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ness and depth of the body and fullness at the poll: its freshness may be ascertained by the brilliancy of the colours, the redness of the gills and brightness of the eyes; when stale the fish is apt to burst, though this often occurs from pressure in package when brought from a distance; but happen from what cause it may, it will give a rancid taste to the fish, particularly over the belly part, which is often from this cause unfit to be eaten, whilst the upper part, and that near the tail is perfectly sound. A haddock, like a cod, ought to be perfectly stiff, and will seldom eat firm unless it be so. The slime ought to look clear and transparent, if it looks dirty, or as if the fish had been washed, depend upon it, it has seen the best of its days, and you had better have nothing further to do with it. Haddocks are in season at from June 'till February, after which the larger ones grow thin and out of season, but the small ones are in season at all times, whilst the large ones as soon as they become thoroughly out of condition take their departure for deeper water. Mr. Pennant in alluding to this, remarks, "It is no less remarkable than providential, that all kinds of fish which frequent the Yorkshire coast (except mackarel) approach the shores, as if it

were to offer themselves to us, generally remaining as long as they are in high season, and retiring from us when they become unfit for use."

The Whiting Pout.—This is a firm and nice tasted fish, very much resembling the whiting in flavour, but for the reasons above stated it should be gutted as quickly as possible after it is caught, as no fish acquires the taint we have been speaking about so quickly as this fish, which is the cause of its being less highly esteemed than it would be were the course we recommend more frequently adopted. This is the more necessary as these fish are often taken in great plenty in the summer months, when the greatest attention is required to keep them, even for the space of a day or two in a sound state. The larger fish are in best condition during the autumn and early part of the winter, but the smaller ones are in good condition all the year round.

The larger fish are delicious boiled, and the smaller ones make a most excellent fry ; but they lose their flavour when kept, and though they may be preserved by being sprinkled with salt, it entirely deprives them of the agreeable taste they possess when dressed perfectly fresh. The whiting pout

we must observe, is known by a variety of other names, as toup, bib, blens, and blinds ; at St. Ives is known by the name of lug-a-leaf, and at Penzance by the name of bot-hock, which, we have been informed, signifies large eyes in the old Cornish dialect. This fish is very remarkable for this peculiarity, as also for a membrane that covers them, which it has the power of distending like a bladder.

There is a little fish, in fact the smallest of the whole cod kind, very much resembling a small whiting pout, which only needs a description in order that it may be avoided, as it is a very indifferent fish. It is called the "power cod," said to be a corruption of "poor," on account of its worthlessness, "poor" and "bad" being synonymous terms amongst the Cornish, who, when a fish is become putrid, describe it as having "*gone poor*." The fish in question is not however very common. It differs from the whiting pout in being of a longer form and generally of a lighter colour, and the scales considerably larger in proportion, so that when the two fish are compared together the difference may be detected, yet it is so slight that it is scarcely possible to lay down any written rules that would be sufficient guide on the subject.

The condition of the whiting pout may be ascertained like the rest of the cod tribe, the brightness or rather firmness of the colour, and a perceptible brightness in the scales, which assume a dingy cast as the fish begins to decay. Also observe that the belly part of the fish is not burst, as in the latter case it is unfit to be eaten.

Rawlin Whiting Pollack and Whiting, and the Green Cod fish.—These fish have a great resemblance in form, but both the former may be readily distinguished from the whiting, not only by their darker colours, but also in the formation of the jaws; the upper jaw of the whiting projecting over the lower, whilst both descriptions of pollacks are under-hung fish, the lower jaw projecting forward like that in the fresh water pike.

The difference between the two species of pollacks, may be easily detected by an examination of their lateral lines; the lateral line of the whiting pollack being of a curved form, rising towards the middle of the back and then sinking and running straight towards the tail; whilst in the rawlin pollack the line is straight from gill-cover to tail, and of a silvery white colour. Both rawlin and whiting pollacks grow to a large size, the

former sometimes reaching as much as 30 and the latter 15lbs ; though half those proportions may be taken as the usual average of the adult fishes.

The rawlin pollack is not a fish that is held in very high estimation, though it certainly eats much better when salted, than when perfectly fresh : indeed, when pickled, Sir R. Bonnycastle as we before stated, considers it decidedly superior to the Newfoundland cod. The almost general rule as to fishes of the cod kind, "the greater the size the better the fish," is completely reversed in the whiting pollack, as the larger he grows the coarser he becomes. The small ones indeed, and which are sometimes taken of a size no larger than sprats, are delicious when nicely fried ; nor are those from a half a pound to two or three pounds weight at all amiss when powdered with salt a day or two before they are used, and cooked either boiled, fried or broiled. Indeed, a lusty fish when in high condition is by no means to be despised, and the ill repute the full grown fishes of this kind have acquired, is, from their being often taken and eaten when they are out of season, which they are during the whole of the summer months ; as they recover from spawning, which occurs in the spring season,

slower than most other fishes and remain lanky and emaciated for several months after.

To choose a large rawlin pollack, therefore you must see that he is very full as well as round about the poll, and well rounded over the back, carrying his size down to the tail. The redness of the gills, brightness of the eyes and elasticity of the flesh upon pressure are the best criterions of freshness. The slime soon dries when exposed to the atmosphere, giving the fish a dingy appearance which often causes a casual observer to fancy it has been longer out of water than is really the case.

The same observations also apply to the whiting pollack, which, though beautifully bright when taken out of the water, the slime as soon as it dries, which it very speedily does on exposure to the air, gives the fish a dull appearance. The freshness may be tested in the same manner as in the rawlin pollack. It should be thick about the shoulders and deep bodied. A lanky pollack is a sad insipid affair.

The whiting pollack is a much better fish than the rawlin pollack, though it is often watery, soft and insipid, when cooked perfectly fresh ; but after being powdered with

salt for a day or two it is nearly equal to cod; and as it is in season during the summer months, when cod fish are scarce and a good one hardly to be come by, they afford a valuable dish for the table at that season. They may be dressed either by boiling, frying or broiling: few fish, indeed, make a nicer broil for breakfast than a whiting pollack, whether large or small: though it is the best way in which the smaller ones can be dressed. Both kinds of pollack make excellent salt fish either preserved in pickle or dried, to manage which properly will form a subject of future discussion.

The Green Cod.—This fish so closely resembles the fry of the rawlin pollack, that many however have supposed it to be the same fish. It is, however, distinguishable by having the jaws of equal length, whilst in the rawlin pollack, as we have before remarked the lower jaw projects to a considerable degree. The green cod is a small fish not often exceeding eight or nine inches, and is more commonly to be met with of about half that size. It has exactly the same flavour as a small pollack, and may be dressed in the same manner.

The rawlin pollack is known by a variety of names as coal fish, whiting coal, sethes,

grey lords, black pollacks, and blockins.—The fry, also, when small are called billets, coal-sies, parrs, and podleys; and when above a foot long they are called poolders.—The whiting pollack is sometimes *par excellence* styled as “pollack” only. On the Yorkshire coast it is called a leet, and in Scotland a lythe.

The Whiting.—It is almost unnecessary to offer any remarks in the whiting’s praise, as its merits are universally known. This, however, it may be proper to state, that when in prime order it is the most wholesome fish the sea produces, and is so light an article of food, that physicians recommend it particularly to invalids, when all more solid nutriment is strictly forbidden.

The largest whiting, it seems, are taken off the Southern coasts of Devon and Cornwall, where they are often met with as large as six pounds weight, and three or four pounds are very common, though, even there, a pound and a half may be taken as the usual average. They are in best season from Michaelmas to the beginning of February, shortly after which they begin to cast their spawn; but from this they soon recover and are again fit for the table by the latter end of May, or the beginning of June.

The whiting, though so good, is a very tender fish and speedily decomposes, whilst the liver, if not extracted soon after it is taken, particularly in hot weather, soon imparts a disagreeable taint to the fish. In order that the flakes of a whiting may shell out in their proper pearly whiteness, the fish ought to stiffen after death, which gives an increased firmness to the muscle; but yet if we examine a quantity of these fishes, all perfectly fresh, we shall often find that there is not a single stiff fish amongst the whole lot. There are two ways however, by which a fisherman may cause a whiting to stiffen; one is by piercing the brain of the fish with a knife the moment it is taken, which kills it instantly, and the fish will then die with its mouth wide open, which whenever a fish does it always stiffens. This we may often see in a number of cod exposed for sale; when you rarely see any with their jaws expanded that are not perfectly stiff. Another mode of producing this stiffness, and a still more certain one, is to cast the fish into a small pail of water just sufficient to cover it, when it will expire in a far shorter time than when out of the water altogether. How or why this is I must leave to wiser heads than mine to determine: but many fish may

be killed in this way, particularly the small Southampton smelts or atherines, which, smaller than minnows, are caught for bait for whiting, and which, if killed by being cast in a small quantity of still water remain firm and fit to be fished with for a whole day: but if allowed to expire in the air would become soft and unfit for the purpose in the course of only an hour or two.

And now how to choose a whiting. Always buy your whittings quite fresh, and having gutted them, you may in the winter months keep them for two or three days in a cool place: but never purchase an uncleaned whiting unless it be perfectly fresh out of the water. When it is so, the colours on the back, which is a pale brown with a pinkish cast, and the white silvery belly should be distinctly seen through the transparent slime: when the fish grows stale the slime becomes thick and the scales assume a leaden dingy cast, or coming off the fish give it the appearance of being water-soaked—when you perceive the latter appearance the fish is not fit to be eaten.

Hake.—The hake has been treated with unmerited disregard, and hundreds of persons, aye and fond of fish too, have been in the daily habit of seeing bushels of these

fishes without once venturing to partake of them. This has most probably arisen from the quantities that are exposed for sale in many of our fish markets, and the slovenly manner in which they are thrown about there, being commonly purchased only by the poorer classes ; and, yet, the sea possesses few better fish than the poor despised hake ; and at length some persons of sense and consequence having admitted it to their tables, it has been ascertained that few fish are capable of being cooked in so great a variety of ways. It is good plain boiled, either when quite fresh or slightly powdered, as it also is broiled : particularly when powdered for a day or two with pepper and salt : and it is excellent stewed, which we shall fully enter upon bye and bye. But the best way of dressing a hake, and, in which respect, no fish can come up to it when cooked in the same manner, is to cut it up into cutlets and fry it in egg and bread crumb. How this is to be done we shall fully point out hereafter.

Hakes are in best season from Michaelmas to Christmas, they commence spawning about January, after which, for some months they remain in a weak and supine state near the bottom, at which time they fall an easy

prey to the trawlers who catch immense quantities of them, which is much to be regretted, as at these times they are out of season and unfit to be eaten, being often infested with worms; and, doubtless, the distaste which many feel to this fish, is the having partaken of it when in an unhealthy state. Indeed, a hake even when in good order is never so good when taken in a trawl as when caught with a hook and line; as from being dragged along in the net, it is prevented from stiffening as it ought to do, in which case, it never flakes out and eats so firm as a hook-caught-fish does.

To detect the difference between a hook and line and a net caught hake, if you examine a fish taken with a trawl, you will perceive the scales or the greater part of them have been rubbed off, and, that the fins are ruffled and broken; neither of which occurs in a hake taken with a hook and line.

To ascertain the condition of a hake, see that it is stout and wide at the shoulders, continuing his width well down the back, and carrying some portion of thickness even to the very tail. The scales on the side should preserve some portion of their silvery cast, which, though resplendent when first

drawn out from the water, soon assumes a duller cast. The fish should be stiff; brightness of the eyes and redness of the gills also afford another criterion of freshness. The latter, indeed, are the principal guides to go by in a trawl-caught-fish, as, when the scales are rubbed off and the fins broken in the manner we have above mentioned, it really looks staler than it really is: and, although a trawl hake cannot be considered so well killed a fish as one taken with a hook and line, it may yet be a very good one notwithstanding, and by no means to be passed by, particularly when no fish caught by the latter mode can be procured.

The Forked Hake.—This fish resembles the common hake, but is easily distinguished from it by two long, slight, naked forked rays growing out from the throat about midway from the gape of the mouth and the pectoral fin, and are half as long as the body. This fish is not very common, though it may frequently be seen in the fish markets of Plymouth and Devonport during the winter. It is taken both with the hook and line, and the trawl nets: but it is not held in very high estimation. The best way of dressing this fish is to split and powder it with pepper

and salt, and broil it on a gridiron over a clear fire.

The Ling.—This is really a splendid fish, sometimes attaining to as much as seventy pounds weight, whilst thirty pounds is a very usual size. We stated before, that in our humble opinion the ling is the best of the whole cod tribe, and in this we are fully borne out by all who are well acquainted with this fish, though there certainly is an erroneous opinion abroad, that, because a ling makes the best of all salt fish, it is not good when eaten fresh. The real fact is, a ling is as superior to other fish when eaten fresh as when preserved. It will keep longer than any fish without any artificial aid whatever, and might easily be transported fresh, during the winter season, from one end of the Kingdom to the other. During the last winter, 1842—3, in most parts of Cornwall, this delicious fish has been selling at the rate of 1d. per lb., and, even at that price from the markets being over-stocked great quantities remained unsold. When slightly powdered, a ling will keep for several days, and it is the easiest fish to cure that the sea affords, taking the salt very readily, and that without removing the back-bone, which is necessary to preserve almost every other kind

of fish for any length of time. Like the cod it has a remarkably fine sound, which can be either dressed fresh with the fish, or salted, in which way, the sounds as well as the tongues, both of this fish and the cod, are prepared by the fishermen, as are also the roes; but the latter we consider are better when eaten fresh with the fish.

The flesh of the ling separates in curdy flakes, whilst its rich glutinous skin is truly delicious, and when in prime order the finest cod does not equal it in flavour. Respect being had to the condition, the larger the ling the better the fish.

Until the ling measures twenty-six inches or upwards, from the shoulder to the tail, it is called a drizzle, and is not reckoned a sizeable fish. It has, however, this advantage, that not having reached to a spawning age, it is in season whenever it may be caught, whilst the adult fishes are out of season during the whole of the summer months. The ling is in greatest perfection about Christmas.

Like many other fish, a ling varies in colour according to the grounds he inhabits, being found from a deep brown colour on the upper parts to a light grey, though the belly is generally, if not always white. It is of a remarkably long form, almost approach-

ing towards the eel tribe. When in good order it is thick about the poll, and the body is thick and cylindrical, yet becoming gradually compressed and flattened towards the tail. One grand criterion of its good condition is the colour of the liver, which should be of an opaque white cast, and the whiter the liver the better the fish; when out of season, the liver becomes red. This, indeed, is peculiar to the whole of the cod tribe, but in none of them is it so remarkable as in the ling. Its freshness may be determined by the brightness of the eyes, redness of the gills, and transparency of the slime; as, also by its elasticity on resisting the pressure of the fingers.

The Burbot.—This fish very much resembles a small ling in form, but is distinguishable from it by the jaws being of equal length, whilst the lower jaw of the ling is much shorter than the upper. Its usual size is about two pounds, though it is occasionally met with double that size. It is a fish we regret we can say but little about from our own experience. Mr. Yarrell, however—a very high authority—states,* that “the flesh is white, firm, and of good flavour, and by some considered superior to that of the eel.”

* Yarrell, *British Fishes*, vol. 2. p. 184.

It is not a very general fish, and is only to be met with in certain localities, and always it seems in the fresh waters. It is found in the Severn, Trent, and Cam, and in several rivers in Yorkshire and Durham; but it does not seem to occur in any single river that discharges its waters into the British Channel. It is known by the names of burbot, burbolt, and eel pout.

The Three Bearded Ling.—This fish is so called from its three beards; two on the upper lip and one under the chin, by which, it may readily be distinguished from the common ling which has but one barb, and that directly under the chin. The three bearded ling is also curiously mottled, and is a pretty fish to look at when quite fresh; yet it acquires an unpleasant smell very shortly after it is taken, and requires to be dressed soon after it is caught. It is best split and fried, but is by no means to be compared to the common ling; nor does it attain to any considerable size, about twelve or fourteen inches being the common dimensions.

This fish is also called the sea loche, or whistle fish. It is common on the coast of Cornwall, but is not much esteemed there.

The Five Bearded Ling.—This is a little fish having five beards: two at the end of

the nose, two just before the eyes, and one beneath the chin. It is a black, ugly looking fish, but eats nicely enough when fried.

The Torsk or Tusk.—This is a Northern fish, swarming about the Shetland Isles, and is seldom brought to our markets in a fresh state. It has something the form of a ling, but is of a stouter make. It makes excellent dried salt fish: but having never had the opportunity of eating it fresh, we can offer no opinion on its merits. Mr. Yarrell, however, says, that “when eaten fresh it is very firm, and rather tough; which makes most persons prefer it dry.” Our observations on the latter subject we must defer ’till we come to treat of salt fish.

SECTION II.

EELS AND LAMPREYS.

As we do not pretend to write in the character of an ichthyologist, we shall treat of eels and lampreys in the same section, which will include the common eels, of which, it seems, there are three varieties; the conger: the sea lamprey: and the common lamprey: all of which are most delicious fishes, whose exquisite flavour amply makes up for the unprepossessing appearance their snake-like form presents to us: though, in reality this resemblance is merely external, the form of the skeleton and all of the internal parts being entirely different.

The Common Eel.—Of this fish there are three distinct known varieties, viz: 1st the silver, 2nd the grig or greg, and 3rd the

broadnosed eel. Of these, the silver eel attains the largest size ; instances having occurred of their weighing as much as 20lbs. but occurrences of this kind are exceedingly rare, a silver eel of 3lbs. weight being considered a fine fish of the kind. The silver eel is remarkable for a bright silvery cast throughout, and is of a longer make than the greg, which has a greenish cast on the back, and is yellow on the belly. The broadnosed eel is of a darker colour, and has a large head and a flat nose. A red finned eel is sometimes spoken of by naturalists, of which, it is said, we English see but few ; so few, indeed, that most modern writers seem to doubt its existence ; upon the merits of this fish, therefore, we have nothing further to remark.

Eels are taken both in fresh water and in the sea. Those taken in fresh water are usually the best, but, sometimes they acquire a rank taste from particular weeds ; sometimes, indeed, to such a degree as to render them wholly unfit to be eaten.

The silver eel and greg are of equal goodness ; the broadnosed eel is far inferior to either of them. Eels are in season all through the year, though they are considered at their worst about April or May. The

largest are best, and on this account the silver eel being usually found of larger dimensions than the greg, is by many considered as the better fish.

It is useless to offer any remarks in this place, on the exquisite flavour of eels of all kinds, which is too well known and appreciated to require any comments from us; and few, if any fish, are capable of being prepared in such a variety of modes. These fish are often brought alive to market, and when this is the case, there can be no doubt of their freshness. When dead, if the slime looks bright and the skin full, the fish is fresh: but if the skin looks dry and wrinkled, it is stale.

The best way to kill an eel is to divide the spine just behind the head, without severing it from the body, when the fish will die almost instantaneously, yet, if the head be entirely severed, the body will continue to move about and exhibit signs of life, sometimes, even for hours afterwards! How, or why, this should be we must leave to wiser heads than ours to determine.—Such, however, is the fact, though to our slender understanding we confess the matter to be altogether incomprehensible.

The Conger.—This fish bears so close a resemblance to the common eel as to induce some to fancy the former is only an eel of larger growth; and, that the difference in colour and appearance is solely owing to the constant abode of the conger in the salt water,; but to a scientific person, the two species are easily distinguishable; so much so, indeed, that Cuvier has altogether withdrawn the conger from the eel family, and made it the foundation of a sub-genus under the name of conger.

The chief marks of difference, independently of the colour, are, 1st that the conger, however small it may be, has always the upper jaw projecting beyond the lower, whilst the common eel is equally remarkable for its protuberant lower jaw: 2nd the lateral line is scarcely visible in the common eel, whilst that of the conger is very distinctly marked, being broad and of a whitish colour: 3rd in the conger being a much more bony fish than the eel, particularly towards the tail, which in the former is so full of small bones as to render that portion of the fish scarcely eatable from the trouble they occasion, but which are never found in that portion of the eel.

The conger grows to a large size, 100lbs.

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being by no means an uncommon size ; yet for some cause or other it is not popular ; which is the more remarkable, as no fish when cooked, presents a more delicate appearance from the snow-like whiteness of its flesh, which is unequalled by any other fish whatever. Stewed in a brown gravy with a pudding in its belly it surpasses every fish cooked in the same way ; it is excellent when dressed in steaks or cutlets, though in this form it must yield up the palm to the hake. It is also excellent either roasted or baked. Large congers, or at any rate, fishes of this kind, exceeding twelve pounds weight are to be preferred, and the middle pieces are the best portion ; these being free from the wiry forked bones that are found about the region of the tail, though these are not so troublesome in a large as in a small fish of the kind.

In these as in other fish, their goodness depends upon their season. Externally the best guide is the thickness of the fish and the depth of the lateral line. The black congers are considered better than the white ; though both are the same identical fish : the difference in colour, being solely owing to the localities they inhabit, and which would soon shift on a change of residence.

In most of the fish markets in the West of England, where these fish are exposed for sale, they are previously gutted ; and cut up in portions to suit the different customers. At these times, an opaque white as contradistinguished from a dirty milk and watery cast, is the criterion of goodness. The whiteness of a kind of fat that lies along the spine, is also a proof of the condition of the fish.

In addition to the modes of cookery we have above suggested, congers make most excellent soup, as also currie : and as for conger pie, it is a dish the Cornish-men almost swear by ; so well, indeed, is the merit of this fish appreciated by the masses of that County, that, take the whole year through, it averages as high a price as the best cod.

Thus, the conger, we think so lightly of, may, in its own proper person, furnish a perfect feast. You may have conger soup ; and fried conger cutlets for your fish affair, roasted and stewed, with pie and currie to follow : each so good in its kind, that an unprejudiced judge of good eating would never regret their re-appearance. Congers, also, make very good salt fish when salted in and dried.

In Cornwall, a singular mode of curing conger, once prevailed, which was, merely

to slit the congers in halves, and, without any further preparation, to hang them up in a kind of shambles erected for that purpose, when the flies, blowing on the fish, the progeny would devour all the parts liable to decomposition, whilst the residue, being dried in the sun, became in this manner fit for use: and, when perfectly cured, were exported to Spain and Portugal. There they were ground into powder, and with this preparation, the natives of those Countries used to thicken their soups.

This traffic is, it seems, now discontinued, as, also, this peculiar mode of cure, which, whilst the process was going on, occasioned a disagreeable stench for some distance around, but which proved very attractive to the poultry of the neighbouring villagers, who assembled around these shambles and feasted most luxuriously on the maggots as they dropped down from the suspended carcasses of the fish.

The cause of the congers undeserved unpopularity proceeds chiefly, we imagine, from its serpentine form and fierce aspect, looking, in fact, a very watery Python; added to which, many have an unfounded idea that he is a foul feeder: and yet, these very selfsame people will feast away upon eels,

without scruple, which are even more snake-like in their form, and out-herod the very ducks and pigs in foul feeding, whilst the conger is extremely fastidious as to the freshness of its food, and many a turbot has been taken by a bait that this fish has rejected on account of staleness.

Congers are in best season from May to November, after which, as they approach their spawning time, which occurs in December or January, they begin to decline and do not recover a healthy condition for some months afterwards.

Of Lampreys.—There are three kinds of lampreys: the sea, the common, and the pride; but the latter being only a small fish, and merely used as bait, is unworthy of our further notice. They are easily distinguished from each other, not only on account of their respective proportions, the sea lamprey sometimes attaining as much as five or six pounds and upwards, and the river lamprey or lamp-fern seldom exceeding twelve inches, but, also, by their colours; the former presenting a rusty mottled appearance, whilst the latter is of the colour of the common eel.

The appearance of the lamprey is far from prepossessing, not only from its resemblance to the snake: but, also, from the circular

shape of its mouth, which is a fixture and always open, and its flexible lips, by which it adheres, by means of suction, to stone and other substances at the bottom, and the seven holes, on each side, through which it breathes, and this added to its mottled colours, render it one of the most disagreeable fishes to the eye we are acquainted with; whilst, with respect to their organization, they must be ranked amongst the lowest of the vertibrated animals, not possessing even a back-bone, whose place is supplied with a mere gristle running down through the middle of the body, without any processes or protuberance whatever.

Yet ungainly as these fish appear to our eyes, if we are to credit historians, they have found as great favour in former times, in those of some men—aye and women too—fastidious as the latter ever have been—as any of the finny race, not even excepting the gold and silver fish of the Celestial Empire. Thus we read, that Antonia the wife of Drusus, had a lamprey at whose gills she hung jewels and earrings. Licinius Crassus is said to have reared them as pets, in his vivarium, where they became so tame as to be obedient to his voice, and to come and receive food at his hands; whilst, according

to Dr. Hakewell, the celebrated orator Quintus Hortensius was seen to weep at the death of one of these fishes that he had kept long and loved exceedingly!!!

But, as every dog is said "to have its day," so the pet days of the lampreys have long since passed away, and they are now only esteemed for the merits they really possess, which are all comprised in their edible qualities, they being excellent either stewed, potted, or in pies; nor are they by any means amiss when simply fried, their vertebral gristle being first extracted. But for all this they are far more agreeable than wholesome food; being apt to create surfeits if eaten in great quantities, in fact, one of our Kings (Henry the first) died from indulging in too plentiful a meal on these fishes; and, yet, strange to say, by an ancient custom, the city of Gloucester, as a token of their loyalty, present a lamprey pie, annually, at Christmas, to the Sovereign of this kingdom, for the time being; a gift, at that season of the year, attended with some expense as well as difficulty, on account of the scarcity of lampreys at that period, which can then scarcely be procured even at the cost of a guinea a-piece.

The lamprey is in the highest perfection during the months of April and May, about

which times it comes up from the sea and ascends the fresh waters for the purpose of depositing its spawn; after which, like other fishes, it becomes out of season, though in this state it is not so often met with: for after it has discharged its natural duties in the fresh water, it takes an early opportunity of returning to the sea, to recruit its exhausted condition.

The Lamprey or Lampern. These little fishes are most plentiful about the month of May, when they may be seen sporting about the shallows, and at these times the females are full of roe, but they are considered in best season from October to March.

They eat agreeably enough when fried, and may also be potted like the sea lamprey. The part below the gill orifices is the only portion that is fit to be eaten.

SECTION III.

FISHES OF THE PERCH KIND, AND MULLETS BOTH RED AND GREY ; ALSO THE SEA BREAM AND ITS VARIETIES.

There are as many as six different species of perch, though one fish only, viz : the fresh water perch is generally known by that appellation. They are as follows, the common perch ; the basse ; the ruffe ; the great weaver ; the little weaver ; and the red mullet ; all excellent fish and exceedingly wholesome wherewithal, though, in no great favour with those whose task it is to clean them, not only on account of the tenacity with which the scales adhere to their bodies, rendering the task of their removal a tedious and troublesome operation ; but, also, on account of the sharp spines which all these fish possess ; some of which, as will be noticed hereafter, being of a poison-

ous nature, a puncture from them is capable of inflicting considerable pain.

The Common Perch.—This fish may be easily recognized by its hog back having two fins: one large and armed with powerful spines, the other soft and flexible: it is remarkable, also, for the dusky bands which ornament its upper part, which is of a rich greenish brown, changing into a golden tinge and varying in blushing tints of pink, blue, and purple, when viewed in day light, and becoming quite silvery on the belly. Perch are in season from the latter end of May 'till the beginning of February. They are a well tasted fish, and the larger they are the better. If allowed to remain undisturbed they would grow to a considerable size: instances having occurred of their attaining as much as five pounds weight; and Pennant states, that he had heard of one that weighed as much as nine pounds; yet, being a very slow growing fish, and being one easily taken both with net and line, their days are commonly cut short long before they have time to arrive at their full limit of bulk, so that half-a-pound may be considered as somewhat beyond the usual average, though specimens from a pound to two pounds are by no means uncommon.

Perch may be dressed either by boiling, frying, or stewing, and for water souchy they stand unrivalled.

The best proof of their condition is the fulness of the head behind the shoulder, and marked development of the colours: the latter, as also redness of the gills, will serve to shew the freshness of the fish, as these fade when the fish becomes stale; in fact, the beautiful changing tints, before alluded to, disappear very soon after the fish is taken. Perch being very retentive of life they are frequently brought alive to market. Indeed, Mr. Yarrell informs us, that in Roman Catholic Countries, they are frequently transported alive over the land for forty or fifty miles; when, if not sold, the ill fated captives are again returned to the place from whence they came, to be re-produced on another day.

The Basse.—This fish has the spinous fins and hard scales of the perch; but is of the colour of the salmon, and, being less hog-backed than the perch, is often tried to be palmed off by vendors of fish, particularly those of the softer sex, as one of the salmon family, under the title of "*salmon basse*," to which it has not the slightest pretensions; possessing, in fact, no resemblance to the salmon tribe except in mere colour, and this

a dace does to much the same extent. The basse, in its own proper person, is, however, far from being a despicable fish: its flesh being white, firm, of good flavour and easy of digestion. It is capable of being cooked in a variety of ways, and may be eaten to advantage, either boiled, baked, fried, stewed, or made up in a pie; the latter being the poor basse's usual fate whenever his ill stars place him at the disposal of a Cornishman. Yet, the basse, though so good and common a fish, has not for many years been considered a fashionable one; scarcely ever, in any form, making its appearance at the tables of the wealthy; and, yet, this fish was highly esteemed by the ancients: many of their writers, and amongst them Pliny and Ovid, having celebrated its culinary excellence.

This fish grows to a considerable size: we have, indeed, seen as large as seventeen pounds, but half that bulk is nearer the average size of what may be considered as adults among fishes of this kind; whilst great numbers are taken ranging between that size and an ounce weight. When very small, the fry are marked with dusky spots like a salmon, but these vanish as the fish increases in size, and are rarely, if ever, seen in a fish of a quarter of a pound weight. A basse of

moderate size, that is about five pounds, is the best for general purposes : the very large ones are apt to eat coarse, whilst the very small ones, of which multitudes are brought to market, if under a quarter of a pound, are very indifferent eating ; but beyond that size a very great improvement takes place.

The best proof of the condition of a basse is the form of the body, which should be rounded over the back, decending gradually without any intermediate depression 'till past the anal fin. A dark upper part is a good sign of condition, though, sometimes a well seasoned basse has the upper part of a bluish-grey ; but when this is the case, the sides should be as silvery as those of a salmon. If a basse is of a pale leaden brown colour on the back, and the sides are dull grey instead of silvery white, and the back sinks just about the second dorsal or soft fin, the fish is in bad order ; and when that is the case it will eat watery and insipid, not at all resembling the agreeable flavour of this fish when brought to table in its proper season.

The spawning time is in summer ; but as some fish deposit their eggs months earlier than others, it follows, that some are in good season, whilst others are unfit to be eaten. The smaller basse, under a pound and a ha¹^c

or so, are in season whenever you can catch them. The basse does not readily decompose after it is taken, and in cool weather, will, if gutted and hung up, keep good for several days without the assistance of salt or any other artificial aid whatever.

The Ruffe.—This fish is like a small perch, and seldom exceeds six inches in length. It may easily be distinguished from the perch, by wanting the dusky bands and having only one fin on the back. It is a very good little fish, and makes a very dainty dish when nicely fried, though, from its diminutive size, it requires some numbers to furnish even a single dish. The ruffe comes in season about Midsummer, and continues good 'till February or March, though but few of them are commonly taken in the winter months or in the early part of the spring. The best proof of their freshness is brightness of the eyes and colours, and redness of the gills.

Weevers.—There are two kinds of weevers, the greater and the lesser weever. The former is of a long form, and the tail is slightly forked at the end; whilst the lesser weever is a deeper bodied fish, and its tail is rounded: the difference between these two fishes is not, however, very material as far as their edible qualities are concerned, as they

both eat much alike, and are two of the most delicious fishes the sea contains: having all the firmness and delicate flavour of the sole; and, yet, these fishes are often cast away, from the absurd idea that they are of a poisonous nature. This proceeds from the fact of the spines just behind the head, which all these fishes possess, having so noxious a property that the slightest puncture from them will cause great pain and swelling, often attended with violent inflammation of the part, which continues very violent for three or four hours, after which time it generally abates gradually, though, the swelling and some portion of the inflammation often continues for days; yet, it is rarely, if ever, attended with any serious consequences.

These formidable weapons of the weevers, the French fishermen are compelled, by the laws of their country, to cut off previous to bringing the fish ashore, or exposing it for sale, and we would strongly recommend our own fishermen to do the like. The most effectual cure for a wound of this kind, is to make a strong brine, and then plunging in the wounded part, keeping the brine heated as hot as the patient can bear it, Mr. Couch says, that smart friction with oil soon restores the part to health.*

* Yarrell, *British Fishes*, 21.

The great weever is often met with as long as a foot ; but the lesser one, which is by far the most common of the two, seldom exceeds four or five inches. These little fishes bury themselves just beneath the surface of the soft sand, which they effect by wallowing, so as to make a furrow capable of receiving them, when, if trodden on or only touched, they will strike their spines against the substance, whatever it may be, and if it comes in contact with a person's bare hand or foot, his feelings, for a few hours afterwards, are by no means to be envied. At the first puncture the pain is not very acute, but it gradually increases for the space of about half-an-hour, by which time the agony becomes intense, as we, from woeful experience, are enabled to bear ample testimony of.

On the coast of Cornwall it is called a bishop, though we are unable to trace the derivation of this title. On the coast of Sussex the large species seems to be known by the name of the sea cat ; and in Scotland, by the title of Gowdie.

Mullets, both Red and Grey.—To ichthyologists there must appear an absurdity in associating the red and grey mullet together, differing as these fishes do in every essential point from each other ; but authors on the

art of cookery have done so, treating both as if they varied no more from each other than a salmon from a sea trout or salmon peal; whereas, in fact, the red mullet bears no more resemblance to the grey, either in form or any thing else, than a pike does to a salmon, or a perch to a trout; the red mullet being a fish, in form like a carp, or, perhaps, what would be more familiar to all our readers, a gold fish, and is of a beautiful red cast; the grey mullet is in form exceedingly cylindrical, and has, in terms more apt than elegant, been compared to, that most useful culinary article, a rolling pin, whilst its colour is a decided leaden grey on the back, growing paler on the sides 'till it assumes a silvery hue on the extreme lower parts; nor are the habits more different than the form: the grey mullet from feeding chiefly on small insects and vegetable substances found amongst the mud, frequently swallows some portion of the mud itself, and so imbibes that taste, or at any rate, its intestines cannot be removed too soon after it is taken in order to prevent that consequence; whilst the red mullet, like the woodcock, is so choice in its food, that it is, like that bird, cooked without drawing: whilst a grey mullet, of all others, would be one of the very last of fishes that could be dressed

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in that manner. Both are, indeed, first rate fish: but both fish are perfectly distinct in their respective qualities, and to dress one in the way of the other would be effectually to ruin a good article by bad cookery. Suppose a red mullet to be drawn and boiled, it would be as poor a boiled fish as could be brought to table; and, suppose a grey mullet to be cooked woodcock fashion, broiled in white paper, what person would have a stomach strong enough to partake of it; and, yet, in two of the most popular works on the art of cookery now before me, I find no other distinction between these two fishes than, that, the one work states, "the sea are preferred to the river and the red to the grey," the other, in precisely the same strain, sets forth, that "the sea mullets are preferable to the river mullets, and the red to the grey." The former gives a very good receipt for broiling red mullets, dressed as they are, woodcock fashion, whilst the other gives you very fair directions for boiling as well as frying a grey mullet, which it would be an act of utter barbarity to perpetrate upon a red one.

And, now about the red mullet, one of the prettiest fishes we have, though, being usually taken in the warmest weather, it is exceedingly difficult to get them so fresh as

they ought to be. Independently of the pleasing taste of their flesh, which, for fishes of their size, is remarkably fine, they are celebrated for the delicious flavour of their livers, which is the only sauce that should be eaten with them; on this account, they are usually dressed without being drawn, but a plan was shewn to us by a gentleman of some experience in these matters, by which, with care the liver might be retained, and the intestines removed, which we must defer 'till we come to that portion of our work which treats on the preparation of fishes for cookery, in which, all these minute and highly important matters will be fully considered.

This fish was highly prized by the Romans, and was one upon which the wealthy classes of that people lavished the most extraordinary sums; which increased in proportion to the size of the fish; and this, not from any superior flavour that this increase of bulk produced, but, merely, that the larger ones were the more difficult to procure; just as many blockheads of the present day never fancy any thing can be good unless it be scarce and dear, and are thus doomed never to eat the articles they affect to be so fastidious about, in a state of perfection.

The vast sums the Romans gave for the

sur-mullet seems almost incredible, thus, according to Dryden's translation of Juvenal.

"———" "The lavish,
Six thousand pieces for a mullet gave,
A sesterce for each pound."

Amounting altogether to the sum of £48. 8s. 9d. of our money; whilst, according to Pliny, lib. 9. c. 17. a consul called Asiniscus Celer, gave eight thousand nummi, or £64. 11s. 8d. modern English currency, for a fish of this kind. Nor did their extravagance even end here, as according to Seneca, lib. 3. c. 117. they were so fastidious about the freshness of their fish, that it seemed not new enough unless it were put alive into their guest's hand; and, that according to the luxurious habits of those days, there were stews even in the eating rooms, so that the fish could be taken alive from under the table and placed on it; and, he says, they took great pleasure to see their mullets change their colours when they were dying. Pennant, also, mentions that Apicius, of renowned gastronomic memory, hit upon a method of suffocating these fishes in the *garum sociorum*, or famous Carthaginian pickle (now we fear, totally lost to posterity) and afterwards making a rich sauce from their livers.

At the present day it is quite enough if we can get our red mullets fresh from the ocean, and in this state we doubt much if they would not eat far better than if suffered to pine away, confined in stews, within doors ; to say nothing of the annoyance of waiting while the cooking process was going on : a matter so tiring to the patience of John Bull, that we may rely on it the absurd practice just alluded to, could never, under any circumstances, obtain ground in this country.

When the red mullet is first taken out of the water, it is of a beautiful rose colour, varying in tints and stripes of a lighter colour ; but these beautiful colours vanish shortly after death, when a brownish cast tinged with rosy red still appears, becoming paler as the fish declines, whilst the slime loses its transparency as the fish becomes stale. Redness of the gills is a criterion of freshness. These fish require to be carried very carefully, and if pressed on by other fish are very apt to burst, which will utterly spoil them. In warm weather they ought to be eaten on the same day as that on which they are taken, for, though, on the next they may be perfectly sweet and wholesome, yet, by this time, their livers will have become soft, and they will have deteriorated considerably from the

exquisite flavour they would have possessed if dressed the day previously.

We are not aware of any way of dressing red mullets except by enveloping them in white paper, and then, either broiling, frying or baking them; in either of which modes they form so exquisite a dish that no one could desire any new mode of cooking them. With us, these fish are sometimes found to attain as large a size as two pounds weight, but about half-a-pound may be taken as the usual average.

They are in most places styled sur-mullet as well as red mullet, in fact, one term seems to be applied to them quite as frequently as the other.

The Grey Mullet.—This fish, although a totally different one from the red mullet, is a most excellent one, nevertheless, having ever been held in great estimation, yet, for some cause or other, it has not, in modern times, been considered a fashionable fish.

Large mullets are excellent, either boiled or stewed, and the small ones are very nice fried. They are, also, exceedingly nice preserved like pickled salmon and eaten cold. In the Mediterranean, it seems that, what is called botargo is made of the melts and roes of these fishes: the materials being taken out

and washed in water and salt for four or five hours, then being pressed a little between two boards or stones, and again washed, it is at last dried for about a fortnight, in the sun, when it is considered sufficiently dried and fit for use.

The mullet is found during the summer months on most of our estuaries ; and, also, in rivers as far as the water runs salt ; though those ascending the rivers, and abiding long there, from the hog-like propensity they possess, of rooting among the mud in search of food, often imbibe a muddy flavour, particularly over the abdominal region, on which account, those that inhabit the open sea, and frequent clear sandy grounds, are usually the best flavoured : yet, it seems that, the river Arun, in Sussex, forms an exception to this rule, those waters having, from time immemorial, been celebrated for the goodness of their grey mullets. These fishes will live and thrive very well in fresh water ponds ; but, it seems, they rarely, if ever, are known to breed there.

The grey mullet, grows as large as six or seven pounds, whilst three or four is a very common size. It seems, there is a smaller species of mullet, rarely exceeding a pound weight, which approaches the shores in im-

mense shoals, and wanders up the rivers in the same manner as the larger grey mullet, from which, it may be distinguished by the extreme protuberance of its fleshy lips ; but there is no difference in flavour between this and its more bulky relative.

The freshness of mullet, may be ascertained by the bright and shining appearance of the scales, transparency of the slime, the brightness of the eyes, and redness of the gills. It is a fish that, upon the whole, keeps well ; but it should be gutted soon after it is taken, to prevent the muddy taint the nature of its food may otherwise impart to it.

The Sea Bream.—This is a deep bodied fish, with large scales and a single spinous dorsal fin, extending nearly from the poll to the tail ; just behind the gill covers, it is marked with a dusky spot like the haddock and john dory ; but we are not informed to what saint's finger and thumb it was that conferred this distinction : though Saint Peter, as we before remarked, is said to have made this impression on the haddock, whilst Saint Christopher, surprising and capturing a dory, when carrying his blessed master over a ford, is said to have caused these marks on the dory, which have been com-

municated to all future dories and haddocks, even unto the present time. The most miraculous part, of which affair is the catching of either of those fishes in localities in which they were never found, as well as in lakes and rivulets which they are never known to inhabit.

The colour of the bream is a pale pinkish red, tinged with grey, growing paler towards the lower parts, which are nearly white. The smaller breams, which are called chads in their youth, are often found of a greyish colour on the upper parts, not assuming the reddish tinge, 'till they acquire some increase of size.

The sea bream is commonly met with of about three pounds weight, sometimes it grows as large as five pounds, and may be commonly met with of all sizes, ranging between that and half-an-ounce weight. It is in best season all through the summer, and is remarkably plentiful on many yarts of our coasts, particularly on those of Devon and Cornwall, where it is sold at a remarkably cheap rate. It eats well plain boiled, fried or stewed. It is also considered to make an excellent dish when baked with a pudding in its belly. It also makes a very good fish pie; and may be dressed in a way as will

be pointed out hereafter, that, but few would distinguish it from a sur-mullet, to which fish they bear some external resemblance. But when salted, as far as we have been able to judge, the bream is a very poor affair, and, consequently, is rarely attempted to be preserved in this manner. Indeed, as a general rule, these fishes cannot be dressed too fresh, and should be cleaned as soon as possible after they are taken. The brightness of their colours, transparency of the slime, and the redness of their gills, will prove their state of freshness. This fish must not be confounded with the fresh water bream, which is a totally different fish in every respect.

The Rayan Gilt-Head, is another kind of sea bream, and is also known by the name of the *toothed gilt-head*; it is by no means a common fish, and may be easily distinguished from the common bream, by the singular form of the profile of the head, which is nearly vertical, and the form of the tail fin, which is the shape of a crescent. It wants the dusky marks peculiar to the bream: is sometimes met with of a larger size than the latter fish, but is rarely taken on our coasts, which, it seems, is the more to be regretted, as its flesh is said to be of the most delicious flavour.

The Becker or Braise resembles the common bream, but does not possess those dusky marks peculiar to the latter, which alone, at once points out the difference; which is also shewn by the form, its body being of a longer make. It is not so common a fish as the bream, has much the same flavour, and may be cooked in the same manner: though, from its greater rarity, it is usually considered as the better fish of the two. There is, also, a fish much resembling the common bream, but somewhat smaller, called the *red bream*, from the fine red carmine colour on the back, which passes into a rose colour at the sides, growing paler by degrees, 'till, at the belly, it assumes a silvery white. It is of a more slender make, and the eyes are smaller than those of the common bream; it is a very usual fish in the Mediterranean, but being rarely met with on our coasts, we regret we are unable to say anything about its edible qualities.

The Black Bream is a fish of much the same size as the common sea bream, but easily distinguishable from the latter by its colour, which, on the back, is of a dusky slate hue, approaching almost to black, and assuming a greyer cast on the sides, which are also marked with lines of a darker cast

caused by the centre of the scales, which are of large size, being darker than the edges. It grows to as big a size as the common bream, it is, however, a much scarcer fish, and though it resembles the latter, it is a better fish : being, when in prime order, exceedingly fat. It may be cooked in the same way as the bream.

SECTION IV.

OF THE WRASSES.

These fishes, of which no less than nine varieties are commonly to be met with on our coasts, notwithstanding their bright and variegated exterior, form but a very indifferent family to meet at a dinner party; the whole pack being, without exception, watery, soft and insipid, which no skill in cookery, that we are acquainted with, has been able to conquer. They are a set, therefore, rather to be known for the purpose of being avoided than of cultivating a closer intimacy with. In form the greater part of them resemble the common carp, as well as in the dorsal fin extending over the greater portion of the

back; as, also in their large hard scales: yet, one remarkable characteristic of the whole wrasse tribe, which completely separates them from the carps, is their large fleshy and flexible lips, often turning upwards and disclosing their teeth, which seem rather to resemble those of terrestrial animals than of fishes, whilst none of the carp species have any teeth whatever in their jaws. The colours both of the bodies and fins of many of the wrasse kind are exceedingly beautiful, varying in tints of red, azure, orange, and all sorts of gay colours, both on the body and fins. They range in size from five or six pounds weight to a couple of ounces. Though very lightly esteemed in most parts, yet, the poorer classes in Cornwall prefer them to many better fish, and thus a wrasse has been there looked upon as a prize, when a whiting pout or a gar fish has been cast aside as unworthy of notice. The best mode of dressing wrasse is to split, and after peppering and salting them well, hang them up for an hour or two to dry, and then broil them, basting them well with fresh butter all the time the process is going on. The freshness of the colours and the redness of the gills is the best proof of their freshness, and it must be borne in mind, that these fishes, like all

that are of a soft and watery nature, are much better if cooked recently after they are taken.

SECTION V.

GURNARDS.

And now we come to treat of the gurnards, a respectable family among the middle classes: all good and wholesome fishes in their way, and dispersed about in tolerable abundance on most parts of our coasts. Of this family there seems to be about five well-known branches, of which, the piper is the head and chief. Besides him we have the tub-fish, red gurnard, red alick, and the grey gurnard. All these fishes closely resemble each other in form as well as in flavour. Their flesh is white, exceedingly firm, and shells out into snowy flakes, and is of a remarkably agreeable flavour; and what is

also highly advantageous, is that they will keep remarkably well after being taken out of the water, so, that, with ordinary care, except in very hot weather, they may be kept good for several days after they are caught, without the assistance of salt or any other material to preserve them. They will also bear being lightly powdered with salt, and may, indeed, be cured as salt fish; yet, in the latter form they are not much esteemed as the salt usually extracts all their flavour. Every one of these fish may be dressed in the same way: viz. boiled, fried, baked, or stewed; but in our humble opinion the large ones eat best plain boiled, and the smaller ones split and fried. All the gurnard tribe have large heads, wide at the top and sloping gradually towards the nose; the cheeks are armed with strong plates. Their bodies which are thicker about the shoulders, taper gradually and become remarkably slender towards the tail. From the large size and bony formation of the head, these fishes weigh more than most others in proportion to the eatable parts they furnish, and, consequently, are not commonly sold by the pound, even where most other fish are disposed of by that mode, but by the fish; in which case, the eye, and not the weight, is the

guide to go by. The best criterion of the season of all these fish, is a fulness and breadth about the shoulders and the brilliancy of the colours; the latter, as well as the brightness of the eyes and redness of the gills furnishing the best proof of their freshness. If the gills are dry and pale, and the eyes dim and sunk, the fish is stale.

The Piper being the most esteemed of the whole gurnard tribe, red gurnards and also tubs are frequently attempted to be passed off by that name; particularly by the fish vendors of the softer sex, who, it is to be regretted, are never known to cry stinking fish, and “fonder are by far of lucre than of truth.”

The piper may, however, be easily distinguished by the singular formation of the snout, which terminates in broad flat cloven plates, with sharp spines at the end. It is also of a pinker cast on the upper parts than the rest of the gurnards.

The Tub is brown on the back, and red on the sides only, with a golden cast below, the belly is white, and the pectoral fins, which are very long, and when extended present a very beautiful appearance, having the form of a fan, and being of a beautiful pale green, edged with deep blue. In the

red gurnard this fin is shorter and edged with purple instead of blue. In the *red alick* these fins are of a red colour. But all these fins, as they lie folded up when the fish is dead, only disclose the spines which look of a pale dirty red, or white, and it is only by expanding them that their true colours can be perceived. The grey gurnard may easily be distinguished by its grey colour spotted with yellow.

Of all the gurnard tribe the tub fish is the largest, as it often attains to as much as eight pounds weight; though from two to four may be taken as the usual average; whilst the piper rarely exceeds three pounds, and two may be taken as the common size, whilst a half or three quarters of a pound may be taken as the usual average size of the rest of the gurnards.

Notwithstanding, the piper possesses the highest reputation, we are still inclined to think that much of his credit is owing to his greater scarcity. We have eaten pipers and tubs placed on the same dish, without being able to detect the slightest perceptible difference in flavour between them; and, yet, our powers of discrimination, in matters of this kind, are by no means defective.

SECTION VI.

FISHES OF THE CARP KIND.

And now, for a time, retreating from the sea side, we will bend our course inland, and see what store our fresh waters will afford us. The fishes such localities produce, are usually those of the carp kind, which, though all are not equally valuable, yet, amongst them, we may select some that have long since obtained, and still retain a high place in the esteem of the judges of good cookery. The first of these in usual estimation is

The Common Carp.—But common though he may be, he is not thought the less of on that account, neither ought we for that reason to be less particular in our description of

him : the crucian—a very inferior fish in every respect—very closely resembling him ; and from this difference not being readily detected has often caused the true carp to fall under unmerited censure, or at any rate, to obtain no greater respect than the crucian itself is justly entitled to.

One certain point of discrimination is the size : a crucian rarely exceeding two pounds weight, so, that, if you select a carp of three or four pounds weight, you are safe ; but there are certain other criterions which may be depended on ; thus, the crucian is a deeper bodied fish than the common carp ; the head is shorter, and the nose more blunt ; whilst the barbules at the end of it are shorter. The colour also is much paler : the sides being of a light olive brown with a slight golden cast, becoming paler towards the belly which is white ; whilst in the true carp, the general colour is a deep golden brown on the back, inclining to a yellow towards the belly. The head of the common carp is also of a much darker hue than that of the crucian ; but the strongest and never-failing distinction is in the formation of the long back fin ; this in the carp sinks soon after its commencement, which does not occur in the crucian.

The common carp grows, sometimes, to a large size: instances in this country having sometimes occurred of their weighing upwards of fifteen pounds; yet, these are mere pigmies in comparison to those of Germany and Italy. In the former country they are often known to attain as much as seventy pounds, whilst thirty or forty pounds is by no means uncommon; but the carps of Italy even exceed these in bulk; instances having occurred of their being taken in the lake of Como, of so large a size as to weigh 200lbs. With us the common average ranges between three and eight pounds. The crucian, as we before stated, rarely exceeds two, and three quarters of a pound may be taken as the common size. Both kinds may be cooked in the same way. Carp, of both kinds, spawn about May or June, at which time, of course, they are out of season: this may be detected by a raw appearance about the abdominal region, and by the scales being rubbed off from those parts.

In many waters that are well calculated for the growth and fattening of carp, they are found to imbibe a muddy and rank flavour either from the soil or some particular kinds of weeds that grow there. In such cases, it is a good plan, where it can be conveniently

done, to place the fish for three or four days in a small pond or stew of clear water, when the muddy taste will soon disappear.

Two other modes are now practised for getting rid of the muddy flavour in carps and other fishes: one is to sew up a piece of bread in the body of the fish, when it undergoes the frying process, previous to stewing, the bread being extracted previously to committing the fish to the stew-pan. The other, which it seems is the French mode, is to pour a glass of strong vinegar down the fish's throat whilst it is alive, which produces a kind of exhalation through the pores, and which is said to be much facilitated by instantly scaling the fish; but that part of the process we cannot recommend; at any rate, not unless the fish be previously killed, and then, probably it would be of little or no service. In Holland, we are informed, it is a very common practice not only to keep carp alive even for weeks out of their proper element, but, even, to fatten them, by enclosing them in a net, enveloped in wet moss, and feeding them with bread and milk, taking especial care from time to time to refresh them, by throwing water over the moss. In winter they are transported alive to a considerable distance, packed in moistened moss,

with a piece of bread steeped in brandy, to keep up their spirits during the journey.

The carp, although mentioned by Aristotle, and Pliny, and a few other ancient authors, does not appear to have been held in very high estimation in their days, yet, in modern times it has borne a first rate reputation, though, perhaps rather amongst our continental neighbours than ourselves.

The head, it seems, is considered the best part: such according to a celebrated French writer,* on the art of cookery, being "*le morceau d'honneur*," and which for that reason he adds, "*doit etre offerte a la personne la plus consideree*." Next to the head the back is considered the best part.

The roe of the carp is often dressed with the fish, and is wholesome and well tasted, in which respect it differs from both the pike and the barbel: the spawn of the former being a strong cathartic, whilst the latter is considered even poisonous. When out of season, a number of small white warty excrescences appear on the top of the head of the carp, and, indeed, all fishes of that genus.

In Italy, and some other parts of the continent a kind of caviar is made of the hard

* De Nouvelle, Cuisine Economique.

roe of the carp, which is considered equal to that of the sturgeon, and which finds a high favour in the eyes of the Jews; the caviar of the sturgeon, which is a fish without scales, being forbidden by the Levitical law, is, consequently, with all its appurtenances, an abomination to all true Israelites.

The Fresh-water Bream inhabits the same waters as the carp, but is by no means so good a fish. It differs from the former in the increased depth of the body, as well as wanting the barbules or beards, which form so remarkable a feature in the carp, the barbel, and some others of the tribe.

There are two species of breams, but as they eat much alike, and the difference between them is so small, any further discussion upon this matter seems rather to form a subject of natural history than the art of cookery, and, therefore, we pass over it without further comment.

Breams, though not now very highly esteemed, seem to have borne a better character some centuries ago. Thus, according to Chaucer,

“ Full many a fair partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breme and many a luce* in stew.”

* Pike or Jack.

Whilst an old French proverb runs much in the same strain, "he who hath breams in his ponds may bid his friends welcome."

Those best versed in such matters consider the head and belly the best part of the bream, whilst, as we have just before remarked, the head and back are considered the best parts of a carp. Breams are dressed in the same mode as the latter fish: in addition to which, they are sometimes broiled with their scales on, in the manner we shall hereafter point out. In Ireland, it seems, the poorer classes cure them, by splitting and salting them, and then drying them; in which state they eat them with their potatoes.

The spawn of the bream is harmless, but the fish when heavy in roe, as it usually is in the early part of the summer, is in bad condition; their spawning time is during the month of May; and they are in best season from Midsummer to Michaelmas.

Their freshness may be discerned in the same way as in the carp. When stale, their eyes look sunk and dim, and a redness may be detected about the belly, particularly about the vent and ventral fins: and the same appearances afford marks of staleness in every one of the carp tribe.

The bream sometimes attains to as much

as ten pounds weight, but examples of this bulk are exceedingly rare: so that from one to three pounds may be considered as the prevailing size that can be obtained for the table.

The Rudd resembles the bream, but may be known as a distinct species, both by the eyes and fins, the sides of the bream being yellow, those of the rudd red, as are also the fins; whilst those of the bream are light coloured, tinged at their extremities with red or brown.

The rudd is not usually met with of so large a size as the bream, though, rudds of two pounds weight are sometimes taken, but a rudd of one pound weight may be considered a fine fish of the kind. These fish may be dressed in the same way as the bream and are considered rather the better fish of the two. They are by no means a general fish, yet, the waters they do inhabit are generally supplied with them in tolerable abundance. They are very plentiful in the broads of Norfolk, and in most of the waters of that county; as, also, those of Cambridge and Warwickshire; also, in the Isis about Oxford, and they are occasionally met with in the Thames.

As these fishes are distinguished by different names in certain localities, it may be

requisite to establish their identity by furnishing our readers with such as we have been able to collect, and, which are as follows, viz. roud, rudd, red-eye, shallow, and fin-scale. The scientific designation is *Lenciscus Erythrophthalmus*.

They are in season at the same time as the bream.

Roach, Dace and Chub are too well known to require any particular description. They are, one and all, watery, soft and insipid even to a proverb. The best way to dress them is to fry or broil them without depriving them of their scaly coating, by which means such goodness as they possess will be retained. The best season of all these fishes is from July to October. The spawn of all these fishes is wholesome, and is, by many, considered the best part of them, as it well may be, for when full of roe these fishes are out of condition, when the warty excrescences about the head, before alluded to, may be easily discerned.*

The Barbel, which is nearly rejected as an article of food with us, both gentle and simple, is by no means despised by the French, who, it seems, by dint of good cookery, do, somehow or other, contrive to make a very

* As to which, see Ante. p. 78.

good dish of him, dressing him in the same manner as the carp, or, sometimes they serve him up merely plain boiled, and eat him with oil and vinegar; but in every instance they take especial care to throw away the spawn, which, as we before stated,* has something of a poisonous nature in it, or at any rate, produces most unpleasant effects, purging violently, as a French writer observes,† “*par haut et per bas*;” and it is said that many have endangered their lives by having incautiously partaken of it.

The large barbels are considered the best, and the parts of the head, around the tongue and the pickings about the collar bones, are the most esteemed morsels. These fish grow to a fair size, ranging generally to between two and five pounds weight.

The Gudgeon, though, but a small fish, is held in fair esteem, in account, as well of its wholesomeness, as of its delicate flavour; on which account it is recommended to invalids; and as they ought to be eaten fresh, and are easily preserved in small vessels, these little fishes are frequently exposed for sale alive. They very soon decompose after they are taken, which may easily be detected by a dull red and discoloured appearance about the

* Ante. p. 78. † Nouvelle, Cuisine Economique.

belly, which, also, becomes soft and frequently bursts. To prevent this, they should be gutted as soon as possible, as, even, the delay of an hour or two may cause them to become tainted.

The only way of dressing gudgeons, is to fry them of a nice pale brown, which, if cleverly done, they will almost come up to the smelt in delicacy of flavour.

There is, also, a small fish called the *bleak* which resembles a sprat, and, in fact, is sometimes known by the name of the fresh-water sprat, and these are sometimes brought to table, but, it seems, they are not much esteemed.

Minnows and Loaches, as also Bull-heads or Miller's Thumts, when you can obtain a sufficient supply, afford, when nicely fried, a most luxurious dish, and may be eaten bones and all together. Loaches, indeed, are sometimes swallowed raw, and alive, by way of a restorative, being considered as more efficacious in that state, than after undergoing the more agreeable process of cookery.

Staleness in all these little fishes may be detected by the belly bursting, and the protusion of the intestines in consequence.

The Tench is distinguishable from the rest of the carp tribe by the slimy coating like

that of the eel, that covers its body. It is a delicious fish when in prime order, being, in our humble opinion, by far, the best of the whole carp kind; added to which it is capable of being cooked in a great variety of ways. Stewed tench, particularly, if associated with a few large fresh-water eels, forms one of the most delicious dishes the art of cookery can be exercised upon; whilst very few fresh-water fishes can be compared with them, either plain boiled or fried; and they also make excellent water soupy.

During the winter months these fish ooze or bury themselves in the mud, and seldom make their appearance 'till the mild weather begins to set in: they spawn about the latter end of May or the beginning of June, at which time they are out of season; but they again become fit for the table by the middle of July, and are at their best about August.

The male may be recognized from the female by his belly fins being of a much larger size. The same, also, occurs in the males of the minnows. Tench are sometimes met with of so large a size as five pounds weight. Indeed, an instance occurred of one being taken at Thornville Royal, that weighed more than twelve pounds; but, generally speaking, the usual size ranges between a

quarter of a pound, to a pound and a half. The best proof of condition is a soundness and fulness behind the head and over the back: the fine golden colour we sometimes see, though often, is by no means a certain proof of their goodness; neither is the exact reverse: instances having occurred where these fishes have presented a most beautiful exterior, and, yet, have tasted so rank and disagreeable as not to be eatable; whilst others of a very inky blackness, have been exceedingly well tasted. But, as these fish will speedily loose any disagreeable taint on being removed to more healthy waters—which, as they will live several hours out of that element, can often be managed without much difficulty—it would be advisable to shift them into stews before killing them for the table, in those cases where the waters they usually inhabit are apt to give them an unpleasant flavour, though this, as we before remarked, may, in most instances, be obviated by adopting the plan already suggested for cleansing the carp.*

The transparency of the slime and brightness of the colours and eyes, and redness of the gills, are certain proofs of the fish being fresh. When the slime is dry, the gills pale, and the eye sunken, the fish is stale.

* As to which, see Ante. p. 77.

SECTION VII.



PIKES AND LAUNCES.



There are two species of pikes known in this Country; viz. the fresh-water pike or ravenous luce, and the sea pike or gar fish. The fresh-water pike grows to a considerable size, sometimes attaining as much as forty pounds weight; the sea pike rarely exceeds two pounds. These fishes, though ranked by ichthyologists as belonging to the same family, have no resemblance in flavour, neither, with the exception of the position of their fins, have they in their external appearance.

The Fresh-water Pike or Luce is usually an inhabitant of large lakes and rivers, though sometimes found in more confined limits. Those taken in large clear running waters are considered the best; next, those from limpid standing waters, and decreasing in goodness, in proportion, as their limits become more confined, and the waters more foul and turbid. Pikes are never found in salt or even in brackish waters; in fact a very slight brackishness, which is sometimes caused in rivers approaching towards the sea by unusual high tides, often proves fatal to them.

The Pike is a winter fish, being in best condition from September to February. The spawning time is about March and April. The spawn, like that of the barbel, is unfit to be eaten, on account of its strong purging property, on which account it is in some places employed as a cathartic.

In the first year the young pikes, or rather jack as they are termed, 'till they reach four pounds weight, have a greenish cast over their scales, which assumes a greyer tint with pale spots as the fish increases in age. When in highest season their spots assume a golden cast, and the grey colour changes to an olive green, which, added to a bulky make

about the shoulders, is the best proof of the sound health of the fish. The freshness also is determined by this and the redness of the gills.

We have heard as well as read that a fish of this kind is sometimes seen of a beautiful gold cast with black spots, though it does not appear to differ in any other respect from other fresh water pikes. We have also known mention made of others possessing a green back bone, and which are said to be more highly esteemed than the ordinary kind; though green bones have any thing but an agreeable appearance, and to this the gar fish, as we shall shortly hereafter notice, owes in a great deal of its unmerited disrepute.

Fresh water pikes were formerly held in much greater esteem than at the present day, for we are informed that in the time of Henry the 8th, they were considered so great a dainty, that a large one was sold for double the price of a house lamb, and a pickeral or jack for more than a fine capon. This high price has indeed by many been attributed to their extreme rarity in those days, having, according to the opinion of some authorities been only then recently introduced into this country; yet this could not have been so, as

it is clearly proved that pikes were a marketable commodity even as far back as the reign of king Edward the first. At the present day they can generally be purchased at a moderate price.

The middle sized fish ; that is those ranging between four and ten pounds, are usually the best adapted for the table. The portions over the ribs are the parts most esteemed, being free from the numerous forked bones with which all the other parts are so plentifully interspersed. These fish may be dressed in a variety of modes, and, take them for all in all, the fresh waters afford us few more useful contributions.

The Sea Pike or Gar Fish is a long silvery fish, of a green colour above the lateral line and silvery beneath, but its most remarkable features consist in its long and slender jaws, projecting forward like the beak of a woodcock. The bones of this fish are also of a bright green colour, and this, added to a smell resembling copper, which this fish emits before it is cooked, has given many a prejudice against it that is altogether unfounded, it being a well tasted fish, perfectly free from rankness, and much resembling a mackeral in flavour but rather dryer. A disagreeable smell when in a raw state is no

proof that the flavour of the fish will at all resemble it when cooked: few fish smell stronger than a fresh herring, and yet it is a mild tasted fish when cooked, and the like observations are equally applicable to flounders and many other fishes.

Gar fish are generally eaten plain boiled, but in our opinion the best way is to split them, and, taking out the back bone, either fry or broil them. They are in season all the summer and autumn months. When fresh they look bright and silvery, if they look dull and dry they are stale.

Sand Eels or Launces. 'There are two distinct kinds of launces, the greater and the less: both species have the power of penetrating the sand where they oftentimes remain embedded even after the waters have ebbed and left the surface dry, from whence they are often dug out, in considerable quantities, with hooks, prongs, and other implements adapted to the purpose. 'The smaller kind of launce is generally known by the name of the "sand eel," though on some parts of our coast, particularly the northern shores of Cornwall, it is erroneously termed a sprat; in allusion perhaps to its small size, which seldom exceeds six or eight inches in length, whilst the launce sometimes attains to as

much as two feet ; but except in its diminutive size the sand eel has little resemblance to the sprat, and still less to the eel, bearing indeed a close resemblance to the gar fish ; except that it wants the beak of that fish though, in both kinds of sand launces the jaws protrude considerably, and are pointed out at the extremity in order to enable them to penetrate through the sand with greater facility. They also differ from the gar fish in wanting the ventral fins, whilst their back fin extends nearly from the shoulder to the tail.

But, notwithstanding, the sand eel is inferior in size to the lance, it is in every respect a superior fish, and it therefore becomes necessary to point out how the two species may be distinguished from each other, for though sand eels never approach to any thing like the dimensions of the lance, yet many launces are to be met with not larger than the adults amongst the sand eels.

And now then to note the difference. First, the sides of the sand eel are flatter, so that it will without the assistance of its pectoral fins fall over and lie flat on its side, whilst the lance, from its more rounded form, will lie either on its back, belly, or sides, the body of the lance is also marked with a deep fur-

row along the lateral line, which is scarcely perceptible in the sand eel; the colour of the upper part of the launce are also of a much darker colour, the lower parts are less silvery than the sand eel, and the head larger and less elegantly formed. And in the edible qualities there is a far greater difference than in their appearance: the launce being watery like a fish out of season, whilst a dish of nicely fried sand eels is one of the most delicious that can be brought to table. They are in best season about the months of August and September, at which times they are full of roe, which is also excellent. The males these times may easily be known from the females, being then—as also occurs with the herrings—more turgid with the milt than the females with the spawn. When stale these fishes become soft and lose their silvery brightness over the belly. They are a species of fish that rapidly decompose and can rarely be eaten to perfection except on the same day on which they are taken. The best way to keep them is to gut them and dry them thoroughly with a clean towel; yet with care they may be kept alive for several hours, and sometimes even a day or more in damp sea weed; but when dead the sooner they are cleaned the better.

SECTION VIII.



FISHES OF THE MACKEREL KIND.



There are four species of mackerel, viz. the common mackerel, the scad, the tunny and the bointo : but the two latter are rarely met with on our coasts, being mere stragglers, who, having lost their way, have wandered towards our shores, whilst the two former are fairly entitled to be considered as the lawful denizens of our seas.

The Common Mackerel.—The general appearance of this fish is too familiar to all classes to require any particular description to distinguish it from any other kind; but

how to describe it in such a manner as to enable an unpractised eye to ascertain its proper condition and freshness is a far more difficult task. Mackerel are a kind of fish that are frequently taken in a half starved condition, added to which, they very soon become tainted, and the better their condition the greater is the care requisite to preserve them, but, which of course must in a great degree depend upon the state of the weather and coolness of situation. On account of mackerel keeping so badly, an Act of Parliament was passed in the reign of William the 3rd, rendering it lawful to sell these fish on a sunday, and so the law still continues.

And now for our directions for choosing mackerel, and first, as to freshness. The back should be of a pale and bright green and the black bars distinctly marked; these in the males are nearly straight, whilst those of the females are in a waving line. These lines also denote the season of the fish, for when they are out of condition an horizontal band of the same colour runs along a little above the lateral line, and joins these bands together from the tail to just below the termination of the second back fin. This is termed by the fishermen "the rogue's mark," and is a sure indication that the fish

is in bad order, and partially, or wholly disappears as the fish improves in health. The sides and belly should look exceedingly bright and silvery, varying with blushes of pink, particularly about the pectoral fins, the body should be stiff, and the skin devoid of wrinkle. When the fish becomes stale the green on the upper sides assumes first a darker and a duller cast, and then a blue colour, the pearly pink tinge vanishes, a dark shade appears about the lateral line; the slime, if it be not dried up, assumes a coppery tinge, the body loses its stiffness, the skin becomes wrinkled, and oftentimes the bowels protrude, though the latter is often found to occur from pressure, when the fish is closely packed, even, after being very recently taken; but, happen from what cause it may, a burst fish should always be rejected.

The best proof of condition is, first, the absence of the rogue's mark, just before alluded to; a deep body, rising well behind the shoulder and sinking, equally so, below, with a general fulness of body throughout: a long thin made mackerel, with a belly like the blade of a knife, is ever an ill tasted fish; and, yet, these are often known to fetch the highest prices; being a few blind stragglers that have been separated from the main shoal,

and are often the fish the fishermen first fall in with. There is, however, a great difference in the shoals, as, also, in the fish contained in the same shoal, some being in good order at the same time that others are directly the reverse. In the spring mackerel are by some said to be the best, but this is decidedly a mistake; for at that season it is difficult amongst great numbers, to find any that are in even decent order, the rogue's mark being then found predominant amongst the greater portion of them. At such times, however, owing to their emaciated condition and the usual coolness of the weather at that season, the spring mackerel will generally keep better than those taken a month or two later. The bulk of the mackerel cannot be considered in season 'till June or July, and they continue good 'till after Christmas, though they are not usually taken in any great quantities so late in the year. Very fine catches have sometimes however been taken off Plymouth at that time, and the fish then taken were the finest in every respect, we had ever the good fortune to meet with.

We have generally found the large mackerel the best flavoured, though, an opinion is abroad that they are inferior to the smaller ones. This, we imagine, arises from the

erroneous supposition that the horse mackerel—which in fact is the scad, and one of the worst of the whole finny tribe—is merely an overgrown mackerel ; whereas, the scad is a totally different fish, and never attaining to anything like the bulk of a full grown mackerel.

The best mackerel are those taken with a hook and line, although, the latter being often found full of food, will not keep good so long as those taken with nets, unless they are gutted soon after they are caught.

Mackerel are a most useful fish, and may be cooked and preserved in a variety of ways, as we shall hereafter duly point out.

The flesh of the mackerel, when the fish is in fine order, is of an opaque and curdy whiteness : when out of season, or kept too long, it assumes a dingy hue like dirty water slightly tinged with skimmed milk, and the worse the fish the darker this colour becomes.

The Scad, as we before remarked, is inferior to the mackerel in size, and in an edible point of view is one of the very worst fishes the sea is known to produce. It bears some resemblance to the mackerel, but is flatter on the sides, whilst its lateral line is covered with a series of broad scales. The general

appearance of the fish is pleasing enough to the eye, the upper part being of a dusky olive hue, varying with blushes of azure and green, which are very bright when the fish is first taken out of the water ; the lower parts are of a silvery white ; one remarkable feature, is, that the extremity of the gill covers, throat and under jaw, are stained black, as if with ink. These fish are taken of various sizes, from that of a sprat, to a pound and a half and two pounds weight, but they are all equally bad, and we have only been thus particular in our description, in order that the appearance, as well as the character of the race may be sufficiently known, to be avoided accordingly.

The Tunny.—This fish may be compared to a monstrous and corpulent mackarel, that having outgrown all reasonable proportions has assumed its dark blue jacket and white waistcoat to complete the disguise.

It is not, however often taken on our coasts, so that those we commonly meet with have been preserved with salt ; but, we have been informed upon sound authority, that, it is delicious when eaten fresh, being as firm as sturgeon, and possessing a still finer flavour. The flesh is of a dark red colour before it is cooked, looking more like butcher's meat than fish ; but it becomes paler

and assumes a more fish-like appearance when dressed. It may be cooked in a great variety of ways, and this our French neighbours, who know so well how to make the most of the good things of this world, take good care to avail themselves of; converting it into delicious soups, ragouts, and pies, as well as serving it up both plain boiled and fried.

The Bonito resembles the tunny in shape, but is much smaller, being usually about two feet and a half long. It is a purplish blue on the back, with dusky sides and a white belly: the flesh is of a dark colour like that of the tunny, but we have been unable to obtain any account we can rely upon as to its flavour; report, however, proclaims it to be but a dry and ill tasted fish.

SECTION IX.

FISHES OF THE HERRING KIND.

Of the herring kind there are no less than seven varieties, all very good and wholesome fishes. They are as follows: the herring, pilchard, sprat, anchovy, whitebait, and two distinct species of shad: the allice and the twaite.

Herrings, Pilchards and Sprats.—These fish very much resemble each other in appearance, but their flavour is totally different.

The pilchard is, however, of a rounder proportion than the herring, and one sure

mode of separating them is by the position of the back fin, which is placed much more forward in the pilchard, so that if suspended by it, it will drop by the tail, whilst the herring will drop by the head.

The proof of freshness in both these fishes is exactly the same, that is in the silvery brightness of the colours and redness of the gills, as, also their stiffness. When stale, the slime acquires a reddish tinge, and the scales fall readily 'off, and the bright green colour on the upper parts assumes a slaty cast.

Pilchards are in season whenever they are to be met with: the grand thing is to obtain them perfectly fresh, at which time, when dressed immediately, their flesh presents a white curdy appearance, but, which soon acquires a duller hue with a tinge of red after the fish has been kept but a very short time.

Pilchards are best when broiled with their scales on without gutting. They are, also, very good split, peppered and salted. In Cornwall they are made up with leeks into a pie. Numbers, also, are salted in for home consumption, and still greater quantities for exportation. In our humble opinion however salt pilchards are very rancid eating, and by no means to be compared with red-

herrings, or any other dried fish of the herring tribe.

Herrings come in season as early as May, though 'till the season is much further advanced, they are rarely taken in any great quantities. From this time 'till within a short time of casting their spawn, they may be considered in season; but after spawning they become thin and emaciated, and are then termed shotten, in which state they are unfit to be eaten, though it is in this form only that the greater portion of them reach the fish-markets of the southern coasts of the kingdom in any considerable quantities.

The male or soft roed herrings are always the best when in proper season, and may easily be distinguished from the females by the superior size and depth of the body; the male being more turgid with the milt than the females with the spawn.

Herrings are usually fried, though they may be dressed in a variety of other ways, as will be pointed out hereafter. Our remarks on red-herrings we must defer until we come to treat on the subject of selecting salt fish.

Sprats are so very like herrings, that many have supposed them to be merely the young of the same species, but there are several very marked differences, one of which is

wanting the axillary scales which both herring and pilchard possess: and the other consists in a serrated roughness along the abdominal line, which in both those fish is perfectly smooth: added to which, the flesh is of a much darker colour. These fish, notwithstanding their excessive abundance and cheapness at their proper season, are most delicious when nicely fried, which is the only way of cooking them quite fresh that we are acquainted with. They are, also, excellent when salted and dried. The season for sprats is the winter.

Whitebait.—These little fishes, which were formerly supposed to be the fry of the shad, are clearly proved to be a distinct species that never grow to any size. Their merits are too well known to require any comment. Their best season is during the months of July, August and September.

We have met with a small kind of fish very much resembling the whitebait both in appearance and flavour, on the Cornish coasts; they are too small to be taken in nets, but are often left in small pools by the receding tide, in which, unless there be an ample supply of water, or a running stream, they soon die. We have, also, taken them in a small meshed shrimp net.

Anchovies, it seems, are seldom met with in a fresh state on our coasts, those we meet with being always preserved in pickle, and form, as we all of us know, a most useful article in the cookery department.

Shads.—Both species of this fish resemble an overgrown herring: of these the allice is the largest, being often met with of as much as two feet in length, whilst the twaite is commonly about half that size; and may be distinguished from the allice by a row of dusky spots, five or six in number, commencing at the gill covers and running along the side line about half way down the body, whilst the allice has only one, and that immediately behind the gills; also by possessing teeth which are wanting in the allice. These distinctions are the more necessary to be kept in mind, as there is a great difference between the respective merits of these fishes, the twaite being in every respect inferior to the allice.

The best season of both these fishes is April, May, and the early part of June: about July they deposit their spawn, and in order to allow them to do so unmolested, they are not allowed to be caught in the Thames after the 26th of June. In this river, however, it seems, the allice shad is rarely taken, though

the twaite is taken in great abundance; but both species are taken in the Severn.

Their criterions of freshness are the same as those in the herring.

SECTION X.



FISHES OF THE SALMON KIND.



Fishes of the salmon kind are reckoned the very aristocracy of the finny race, and are universally held in first-rate repute. Of these the salmon, the very king of fishes, ranks pre-eminently first. This fish is so well known that a particular description of it may seem unnecessary ; but this is not strictly correct, as far at any rate as proof of its condition is concerned, as no fishes vary so much from each other as do the salmon ; some coming in and out of season months

earlier than others, depending, in a great measure, upon the time of ascending the different rivers from the sea: on this account some salmon are to be met with in good condition throughout the greater part of the year. The time the greater number are in season is from June to September; but even in the same waters there is often several months difference in the relative conditions of the salmon they produce, which depends chiefly on the time of their leaving the salt water, and how far they are advanced towards their spawning time. When the rudiments of spawn first appear the fish is in best condition, and as the fish grows more advanced it deteriorates considerably in goodness; the smallness of the roe in a female fish is generally a pretty sure proof of its goodness; another proof is a beautiful pink red, whilst the flakes are clearly developed and the scales below the lateral line being of a silvery whiteness. The male salmon, or as it is generally called the kipper, is known from the female by the hooked form of the lower jaw. The best proof of condition in a salmon when entire is a small head and thick shoulder, a roundness and breadth over the back, and thickness down to the very tail fin; the upper part of the back should be of a

dark colour, and the cheeks and sides resplendent and silvery, and the whole fish stiff and firm. When a salmon is out of season it loses its silvery cast on the sides, which then acquire a copper coloured tinge, and the upper part assume a dirty grey cast; whilst in the male the cheeks become marked with orange coloured stripes, and the lower jaw grows out to a considerable size, forming in part a groove in the upper; sometimes when thoroughly out of season these fish assume a dusky colour all over, and becoming lanky and thin denote plainly enough the wretched order of the fish, though even when they assume the orange tinge on the sides they are no longer in a fit state to be eaten. It is a very common practice to crimp salmon, which, to be of any service, must be done immediately on the fish being taken out of the water, it being first killed by a few hard blows on the head and the incisions made immediately afterwards. It is as unnecessary as cruel to crimp the fish when alive, nor is the practice by any means so general as is supposed; at any rate at the salmon fisheries we have had the opportunities of visiting, the fish was always killed before the crimping process was resorted to.

This operation causes the fish to eat dry

and crisp, and is a great improvement to a small fish or one that is not in first-rate order, as these would otherwise be apt to eat soft and woolly; but in a large, fine-fed fish it causes it to eat too dry and brittle to please some palates, whilst others value it the more highly on that very account.

To choose crimped salmon, see that it rises at the edges of the cuts; that the muscle is much contracted between them, which should develope the flakes, and appear firm and elastic.

The various modes in which salmon can be cooked and preserved, will be treated of hereafter.

The Salmon Peal or Salmon Trout very much resembles the salmon in external appearance, but may be recognized as a distinct species by the fins, particularly the pectorals, which in the salmon are of a dark cast, being in the peal of a pale colour approaching to a clear white. It comes in season about the same time as the salmon, and when in prime order presents the same silvery cast, and also cuts pink and separates in flakes when dressed. It does not attain to near so large a size as the salmon, though instances sometimes occurs of its reaching to as much as ten or twelve pounds, and Mr.

Yarrel, in his interesting treatise on British fishes, mentions that he had seen one in the possession of Mr. Groves, the fishmonger, of Bond Street, that weighed seventeen pounds.* The usual size of those exposed for sale is from three quarters of a pound to three pounds weight.

The Bull Trout, Truff, Budge or Bouge, resembles the salmon and salmon trout, but is of a less elegant make, having a larger head and being altogether of a clumsier form, with sides and belly of a less silvery cast, which is caused by the scales being thinner and more transparent than in either of the the two former fish, so that the colour beneath them is the more easily discerned. In full grown fishes the tail is convex instead of concave at the end, from which it has received the name of round tail. It grows to a large size, sometimes attaining to as much as twenty pounds, but the more common size is from four to ten pounds. It is in season at the same time as the salmon and salmon trout, but is far less highly esteemed, its flesh never attaining that beautiful pink colour for which those two latter fishes are so justly celebrated; for when in highest season the flesh of the former never acquires more than

a pale orange tinge; and at other times it is of a yellowish white: on this account it is commonly sold at a much lower rate than either the salmon or salmon trout, but when in prime order it is by no means a bad fish.

The great Grey Trout very much resembles the bull trout, both in appearance and taste, but is only to be met with in some of our large standing waters, as the lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland. It grows to as large a size as the salmon, but the middling sized fish are considered the best, though upon the whole it is not a fish that is very highly esteemed. It is in season during the summer.

The common Trout.—There is no fish that varies more in condition than the common trout. The best are taken in clear running waters, and when in best condition their flesh has the pink hue of the salmon; still this colour is only peculiar to the trout in some waters; as in many the flesh of those fishes never acquire that appearance; but these, if they are in season, the flesh immediately under the skin is covered with a coating of a deep brown colour, the flesh beneath being of an opaque white, or pale cream colour. In some waters trout come in season much earlier than in others. The

best proof of condition is a small head, thick shoulder, deep body, bright scales and spots, and a general splendour of colouring, which varies much according to the different colour of the soil the waters they inhabit flows over.

The small trout come in season much before the large ones, the latter are seldom in good order till the middle or latter end of May, and begin to decline about September.

The brightness of colour, redness of gills, and stiffness of the fish is the best proof of its freshness.

There is a fish very like a small trout, called *the parr*, which is a most delicious little fish. It may be distinguished from the trout by having a more delicate and rounded form, a blunter nose, and a smaller mouth; whilst a large dark spot on the gill cover affords an inseparable mark, by which alone it may be distinguished.

These little fish are in best order during the month of July and August; they are most delicious when fried, but when potted, like charr, in the manner we shall by and bye point out, they are, in our humble opinion, quite equal to the latter fish.

The Charr is a much larger fish than the parr, which seldom exceeds six or seven in-

ches, whilst the charr is often met with as much as a foot long, and nine inches is by no means an unusual length. The charr is considered in best season from July to October, but they are not taken in any quantities 'till the months of November and December, when they approach the shallow waters in order to deposit their spawn, at which times they are beginning to fail in condition. They are by no means a general fish, being chiefly restricted to a few of the lakes in the northern parts of England. Their freshness is tested in the same way as the trout.

The Grayling is also only to be found within certain limits, which is the more to be regretted, as it is an excellent fish; added to which it comes into season just when the trout goes out, and is therefore admirably adapted to take the place of that fish.

Grayling sometimes grow to so large a size as to weigh five pounds and upwards, but from three quarters of a pound to three pounds may be considered as the more common average.

A full grown grayling when in highest season is of a dark colour about the head and gills, with a golden tinge on the sides, varying in different lights: but the little ones are always of a bright silvery cast, and are in season all the year through.

Graylings are dressed in the same way as trout, and their freshness may be ascertained by the same rules.

Smelts are usually in best season from August to May, and are taken in considerable quantities in the estuaries and large rivers that discharge themselves into the British channel, though a fish something resembling it—and a very good fish too by the way—is in those parts confounded with and distinguished by the same appellation. The true name of the latter fish is *the Atherine*, which may readily be distinguished from the smelt by the superior size of its second back fin, which in fact is the larger of the two, whilst that in the true smelt is a small fleshy excrescence without rays, which form so remarkable a feature in all the salmon tribe. Both species of fish resemble each other in flavour, and possess the smell resembling cucumber when first taken out of the water, but the true smelt is considered the better fish.

A bright silvery appearance, red gills, and a general stiffness are the best criterions of freshness. Smelts we believe are best fried, in fact they are rarely if ever dressed in any other way. If a dull cast prevails, and the eyes look sunk, and the abdomen discoloured the fish are unfit for the table. 1. 2.

There are also two other species of fishes which are classed amongst the trout and salmon family, viz. the *vendace* and *gwyniad*; both of which externally resemble rather a herring than a trout, though having the second spurious dorsal fin places them among the *salmonidæ*. They are found in a few of our lakes, but are it seems held in very little esteem.

SECTION XI.

DORIES.

The John Dory, or Doree.—This is the only species of this fish that is commonly met with on our coasts, though a disreputable relative called the boar fish, a rank, good-for-nothing fellow, that, bearing some external resemblance to the dory in form, is sometimes to be met with on our coasts ; but still its immense eyes and small mouth, as well as the want of the long filaments on the back, and the absence of St. Christopher's

mark on the sides are sufficient to point out the difference even to the most casual observer.

As for the common dory, it may fairly dispute the palm of excellence with any fish in the sea, and seems even in times of the ancients to have borne the highest reputation, who even gave it the name of their supreme god, Zeus or Jupiter. The term dory, even among moderns, is said to be derived from the french word "*adoree*" worshipped; probably from the adventure of St. Christopher, as according to some authorities it was the dory and not the haddock that furnished St. Peter with the tribute money, which in fact has so far obtained credit among the firshermen that they style the fish "*il janitore*," or the door keeper, in allusion doubtless to St. Peter's office of keeping the keys of heaven. His name "john" is a mere corruption of the french word "*jaune*" yellow, from a golden tint that prevails when this fish is first taken out of the water. We assert therefore no further claim for honours on his behalf than he shows himself entitled to by the test of pot or pan, as fried, or boiled, we agree with the celebrated Mr. Quin, that no fish is entitled to rank as his superior, though we have heard that this eccentric personage went so far as to eat his dories with the livers of the surmullet,

rejecting altogether the bodies of the latter fish, and which, except as far as the liver is concerned, is an inferior fish to the dory. This we are the more ready to credit as the dory, though it possesses a large liver, yet from its being rancid and full of oil is by no means a pleasing accompaniment.

Nor is this the only anecdote connected with Mr. Quin and the dories. It is said that he once pronounced that the inhabitants of Plymouth ought to be the happiest of mankind from the simple fact of their abundant supply of these fishes; but it seems that on visiting those parts, the reality did not come up to his expectations, for he expressed his opinion that, though the natives had some notion of cooking fish, they were totally ignorant of the art of melting butter, and that if he looked for earthly happiness he must go elsewhere to seek for it.

The eccentric habits of this extraordinary individual were most remarkable, he being often, without any apparent cause, known to lie in bed for two or three days together without any apparent indisposition to keep him there; though very probably for the purpose of sleeping off the effects of his former excesses. During his stay at Plymouth his first inquiry before he rose was as to the state

of the fishmarket, when if the report was unfavourable, he would merely desire to be called again at the same hour on the following day, and again betake himself to repose.

On one occasion on his return from Plymouth to Bath, his love for john dories still remaining unabated, he sent directions to the landlord of the principal inn at Ivybridge to procure some of the finest on the day he expected to arrive there ; and in order that they might be dressed in the highest perfection he actually had a cask filled with salt water, and strapped on to his carriage, not esteeming fresh water to be so well adapted for the purpose. Now it unfortunately so happened that from bad weather or some other cause no dories could be procured, and so annoyed was Quin with the disappointment, that notwithstanding an excellent dinner, in every other respect had been provided, he refused to partake of it, or even to enter the house, and casting his water cask adrift, he left the place in a rage and proceeded fasting on his journey.

Dories are found in greatest abundance on the southern coasts of Devon and Cornwall. They sometimes weigh as much as twelve pounds, but the greater portion that are taken are not of half that size. The larger are in

best season from Michælmass to Christmas, but they are good fish at all times. They keep better than most fish, yet as they are greedy grubbers, it is the best plan to take the earliest opportunity of gutting them otherwise the parts over the intestines and around the collar bones will acquire an unpleasant taint, whilst it must be remembered that just about the latter parts is the prettiest picking throughout the whole fish. There are also some delicious morsels about the head.

Large dories are best boiled, but the smaller ones should be fried ; these are the only two modes by which they ever should be dressed. The flesh is of a fine clear white when dressed, with the exception of the flakes over the fins, which are of a dark brown hue.

The brightness of the colours, fulness and freshness of the eyes are the proper criterions for freshness.

SECTION XII.

FISHES OF THE TURBOT AND FLOUNDER KIND.

This tribe, which are commonly called flat fish, are, some of them, of first-rate reputation and all are exceedingly useful, being wholesome, well flavoured, and keeping much longer without artificial aid than most other fishes.

Of the flounder tribe there are no less than thirteen distinct kinds that may daily be met with in our fish markets: viz. the turbot, brill, halibut, plaice, flounder, dab, smear dab, whiffe, top-knot, sole, red-back, lemon sole, and the scald fish.

The Turbot is a fish that has exercised the skill of the professors of the culinary art from the days of Apicius, down to the present time, and whose merits are universally acknowledged by all; still, this does not render it the less necessary that we should be somewhat particular in our description of it, as, another fish, the brill, by no means so good an one, very closely resembles it in external appearance; whilst the halibut, one in every respect inferior, has, in the northern parts of this kingdom, acquired by reputation the title of turbot, just as a subaltern officer at a distance from head quarters is sometimes styled "captain," and with about the same pretensions.

The true halibut has little external similitude to the turbot, being of a much longer form, yet, by change of names just as singular, the brill, in the vicinity of Plymouth, is known by the title of halibut; the real fish of that name being remarkably scarce on that coast. Yet, how or why this confusion of names has arisen we are utterly at a loss to discover, there being so little resemblance between the halibut, and the turbot, or the brill; both the latter being remarkably broad in proportion to their length; whilst the former, except the sole, is of a more elongated form than any other kind of flat fish whatever.

The turbot is of a remarkably round form, its eyes are exceedingly small, and deep sunk in the head, and between them is a slight crest; the mouth is large and the jaws well armed with small teeth; the lateral line is very much bent towards the head, the dorsal fin advances towards the end of the upper jaw, and extends, as well as the anal, almost to the tail. The upper side of the body is brown, marked with numbers of white spots, the skin is without scales, but the dark side is covered with small short spines dispersed without any order.

The best proof of condition is the thickness of the body and an opaque light cream colour on the pale side, if thin with a bluish cast like water tinged with butter-milk, it is out of season.

A turbot ought, as soon as taken, to be bled near the tail, otherwise it will assume a red cast about that part, which impairs its appearance not only at the fishmonger's stall, but also when the fish is brought to table, giving that portion of the fish a dark and unpleasing appearance.

Turbots sometimes grow to a considerable size; the largest we have any authentic account of weighed one hundred and ninety pounds, and this was caught off Whitby,

early in the spring of 1832. From fifteen to twenty pounds weight may be considered the range of adult fishes, though thirty pounds is by no means an unusual size. Sometimes they are taken even less than a hands breadth, but at so insignificant a size they ought, if possible, to be re-committed to the deep; yet as small as a pound weight they acquire a very fine flavour; but the best fish are generally from twelve to twenty pounds.

In the northern parts of England, this fish is generally called a bret, and in Scotland it is known by the name of bannock fleuk, or rawn fleuk, though the term rawn is generally applied to signify when a fish is full of roe.

The Brill, though it bears a close resemblance to the turbot, has a narrower body and is also much thinner; it is also free from spines on the back.

At Plymouth it is generally styled a halibut, though that title belongs to a totally different fish. In Cornwall the brill is often called a kite, whilst in the north it is called a pearl. It is dressed in the same way as the turbot. It does not attain quite so large a size as the latter fish as it seldom exceeds ten pounds weight, and being a much thin-

ner fish than the turbot, it does not weigh near so much in proportion to its apparent bulk.—Its criterions as to freshness and season may be tested in the same way as the turbot.

The true Halibut or Holibut grows to an immense size, being often taken more than one hundred pounds weight, and sometimes, even, of five times that size; yet the larger fish are commonly dry and coarse, and on account of the great bulk of these fishes it is usually cut up and sold in slices. The best parts are the flakes over the fins and the pickings about the head. It is of a much longer form, not only than the turbot and brill, but also of most other flat fishes. It may be dressed in a variety of ways, which will be pointed out in their proper place, and although, by no means to be compared with either the brill or the turbot, yet, take it altogether, it makes by no means a bad dish. It is in best season during the spring. The most esteemed size is from twenty to forty pounds weight.

The Plaice may be distinguished from the rest of the flounder tribe by the vermillion spots that mark its darker side: when in season the colour of the pale side is of an opaque cream cast, with sometimes a slight

pinkish blush; if that side has a bluish milk and watery or curdy appearance, or look ribbed and thin, the fish is out of season.

This fish grows to a tolerable size, six or seven pounds being very common, and sometimes they reach to double that weight. The plaice comes in season about May and continues good 'till the latter end of January. When in good order it is a most delicious fish, though of no great reputation, and what is rather extraordinary, it is much improved by being well beaten with a flat piece of board or a rolling pin previous to being dressed, by which process the watery softness, which so many except against this fish when dressed, is in a great measure obviated. A large and well conditioned plaice should never be dressed in any other way than plain boiled. Crab sauce is the best that can be eaten with it; but lobster, shrimp sauce, or anchovy may be substituted, as may also oysters from September 'till January. Small or ill conditioned plaice should be fried.

Redness of the gills and brightness of the eyes are the best criterions of freshness.

The Flounder grows to about three or four pounds weight, but from half to three quarters of a pound may be taken as the common size. In form it resembles the plaice, but

may be distinguished from it, and indeed every other kind of flat fish, by a row of small sharp spines that surround the upper sides and are placed just at the juncture of the fins with the body; another row marks the side line and runs half-way down the back. The dark side is sometimes spotted with dirty yellow, and sometimes the prevailing brown colour is marbled with a darker shade of the same colour; but the tint of the dark side varies much in proportion to the cast of the ground they swim over: the usual colour of the lower side is white, though it is often marked with dusky patches either wholly or partly covering it, this is generally considered a proof of good condition; but the most certain proof is the thickness of the body and a creamy cast, with a slight reddish tinge. Like the plaice, the light side acquires a milk and watery appearance, when it is thin and out of season.

Flounders are in best order during the months of September, October, and November, at which times the females are generally full of roe. Except when in very high condition they are soft and flabby, and at all times they are inclined to be watery. This may, however be in a great measure subdued by pursuing the directions we shall

shortly hereafter lay down when we come to treat of cleaning and preparing fish for cookery, a very important affair, though one to which very little attention is usually paid.

The Dab is a very nice little fish, in shape resembling the two former ones; but may be distinguished from them, not only by its rough scales, which the two former species are without, but also by a clear pearly whiteness on the light side, except that portion which covers the intestines, which is of an opaque milky white, contrasting strongly with the clear white of the surrounding parts beneath.

The dab seldom attains a foot in length, eight or nine inches being the usual size of a full-grown fish; but it is an exceedingly good one, particularly when nicely fried. It comes in season about August, and remains good 'till April, its spawning time being about May or June.

The Smooth Dab is something in shape like the common dab, but is without the rough scales of the latter fish; nor is it, in our opinion, so good an one, though many consider the two fishes much upon a par with each other. It is in season at the same time as the common dab, and may be cooked in the same way.

It is known by various names on different

parts of our coasts : as smear dab, smooth dab, merry sole, town dab, lemon dab, and sand fleuk.

The Whiffe is a thin fish of a longish make, of a pale brown on the upper side and a transparent dirty white below ; the eyes are remarkably large, and the upper one bigger than the lower. It grows to the length of a foot and a half, but from its extreme thinness it seldom exceeds a pound weight. It is, upon the whole, the worst of the whole flounder tribe, being soft, watery, and insipid. In some parts of Cornwall this fish is called the carter, and at Plymouth it is called a French sole.

These fish are better fried than dressed in any other way, and are much better if cooked recently after they are taken.

The Top Knot is of a squarish form, or rather the shape of its fins give that appearance to the fish. The colour of the upper side is a dark brown, which in some specimens assumes a reddish tinge mottled with darker shades of the same colour ; this side also contains several star-shaped spots of unequal size, and of a dark colour, which also have a reddish cast as the light passes through them : one remarkable black band crosses the head nearly in a right line with the eyes ;

the scales are small and very rough: the under side is smooth and white.

It is a scarce fish on most parts of our coasts, but is frequently to be found in the Plymouth fish market.—It eats agreeably enough when broiled or fried. Those commonly taken are about nine or ten inches long.

There is another species of top knot easily distinguishable from the former by a long ray or filament at the commencement of the back fin. This fish is even more rare than the former one, and about equal in goodness.

The Sole is so well known a fish that it would seem unnecessary to give any particular description of it, were it not that there are three other fishes all inferior to it, that very much resemble it: viz., the lemon sole, red back, and scald fish. The first may be known as a distinct species by its broader make and the mottled appearance of the upper side, a black spot at the end of the pectoral fin also affords an inseparable mark: whilst the scales on the lower side are very strongly marked, which in the common sole are so minute as to be scarcely discernible: this fish is sometimes called the French sole, but is a perfectly distinct fish from the whiffe, which we have already stated has been called by that name.

The Red-back is so called from the prevailing colour of the upper side, mottled with darker shades of the same hue: it may be distinguished from the common sole by the superior size of its scales, as well as colour. It is not so common a fish as the sole, but is sometimes taken off the Devon and Cornish coasts.

Neither of these fishes, as we before observed, are equal in goodness to the common sole, though they are by no means amiss if nicely fried; they seldom exceed seven or eight inches in length.

The Scald Fish is a very small affair of about four or five inches at the utmost. It is not a very common fish, but is sometimes taken by the trawlers, when its scales, which are easily detached, being rubbed off, gives it a naked and par-boiled appearance, from which, doubtless, its name is derived. Its great scarcity and diminutive size renders it of little use for the table.

The common sole weighs very lightly in proportion to their apparent bulk: one of three pounds being a large fish of the kind, though instances have occurred of their being taken of as much as eight or nine pounds weight. Soles when in good season are of a creamy white on the lower side, they should also be

thick about the shoulder, and, above all things, you must avoid those with the sky blue tinge. These fish keep remarkably well unless when full of food; but the ill effects of the latter may be counteracted by gutting them soon after they are taken.

The best proof of their freshness is the transparency of the slime over the dark side, through which the fine scales can be easily discerned, as also a frothy appearance in the slime on the lower side, but if gutted these fish will be perfectly good, long after these appearances have departed.

SECTION XIII.



FISHES OF THE SKATE KIND.



Notwithstanding there are as many at least, as twelve distinct species of fish of this kind, the flesh of all, when prepared for the table, passes under the general name of skate, although that fish is inferior to most of that class of fishes.

From the unprepossessing appearance that every one of these fishes present, they are far less highly esteemed than they deserve: for if properly prepared, they have an agreeable

taste, added to which, they are exceedingly wholesome and nourishing.

It is only a portion of these fishes that is usually eaten: viz. the parts surrounding the wings or pectoral fins, which form a very distinguishing feature in the whole of the skate tribe, having a larger surface than even the body itself, and being supported by a number of cartilaginous rays or bones. The picking about the jaws are also considered choice morsels, but the remainder of the fish, though the greater part is not unfit for food, is usually thrown away, or applied to the more useful purpose of baiting crab pots.

The wings are consequently the only portions that are exposed for sale, which are previously skinned and cut into stripes about two inches wide and kept in salt and water; this is the best mode of extracting a raw kind of rankness that is often found in these fishes when dressed too fresh, but which vanishes if they are kept a day or two.

Skate is best during the Autumn and Winter, but the smaller ones are equally good at all seasons.

Many of the skate tribe grow to a large size, instances having occurred of some of them having attained as much as two hundred pounds weight, but these are rarely

good, being both rank and tough: generally speaking, those about ten or twelve pounds weight are the best.

The most common species of skate, are the common skate, the thornback, and the homelyn ray. There are, however, two distinct kinds of skate, the long nosed, and the blue skate: both these are remarkable for their long and sharp noses, which in the homelyn ray is very little produced, and in the thornback scarcely at all. In addition to this there is also a sharp nosed ray; but in the latter fish, the wings are rounded, which in the skates are more of a lozenge form; yet, as there is little real difference, as far as the edible qualities are concerned in most of the varieties, it will be sufficient merely to point out such inferior kinds as should be avoided, which are the sting ray, the eagle ray, sea devil, and torpedo. These, though not absolutely unfit for food, are such indifferent eating, that we would never advise any one to put their merits to the test, by attempting to eat them, when anything better in the shape of food can possibly be obtained.

The Sting Ray has a long flexible tail that is armed with a powerful spine five or six inches long, with which it is capable of in-

flicting a very severe wound; whilst it is remarkable for the colour of the upper part of the body, the middle of which is of a slate colour, and the rest of a dirty yellow. This fish sheds and renews its spine annually, and sometimes the new appearing before the old one drops off, causes it to appear as if it had three tails, owing to which circumstance, it is often called the three tailed ray.

The Eagle Ray is a frightful fish, having a long tail armed with a terrible spine; whilst its toad-like head, partly disengaged from the pectoral fins, gives it a most repulsive appearance; but in this it is even exceeded by the sea devil; a perfect marine monster, owning a still more fiend-like tail, whilst its expanded wings and cloven snout seem to give it a fair claim to the diabolical title that has been conferred upon it.

The Torpedo does not much resemble any one of these last mentioned fishes, being almost of a circular form, so that, in fact, its head can hardly be perceived, whilst, instead of a long and flexible tail, that of the torpedo is short and thick, and has a fin at the extremity. This fish may therefore be readily distinguished from any of the rest of the ray kind; and very lucky it is that such is the case, as it possesses the extraordinary pro-

perty of benumbing any living thing it comes in contact with, the effect of which may be sensibly felt, even if it be touched only with a stick, and Oppian has even gone so far as to say, that it will benumb the astonished fisherman even through the whole length of the rod and line, and, doubtless, occasionally astonishes the natives when roving amongst the oyster-beds.

In fact, it is by concealing itself in the sand, and letting fly its electric battery on the fishes that pass heedlessly over it that it is enabled to capture many fishes, that from its unwieldy form it would be impossible to overtake by pursuit. Added to this its benumbing powers must prove a most formidable means of defence, and its shock when recently captured is truly tremendous ; but this quality decreases, in proportion, as the fish declines in strength, and wholly ceases when it expires.

It is said, that to this fish we are indebted for the application of electricity to medicinal purposes, and which the ancients effected by its means, and even at the present day it has been recommended as a cure for the gout, the patient placing his foot on the back, a very desperate experiment if applied when the fish was in full strength and vigour.

This benumbing quality does not, it seems, tend to render the flesh of the fish unwholesome, its only disqualifications being a rank and watery flavour. It grows to a large size, sometimes attaining to as much as eighty pounds weight; it is occasionally taken on our coasts, but is much more frequently on the French side of the water.

Upon the whole, therefore, of the twelve species of skates, eight are fit to be eaten, and four are worthless. The former are the skate, long nosed skate, thornback, homelyn or sand ray, bordered ray, sharp nosed ray or burton skate, painted ray, and the starry ray, the worthless, as we before stated, are the sting ray, eagle ray, sea devil, and torpedo.

Skate may be eaten either boiled, fried, or stewed; and when served up with crab sauce is delicious.—If that cannot be procured substitute anchovy.

SECTION XIV.



STRAGGLERS, OR A FEW OF ALL SORTS.



Although there are no less than fourteen species of sharks to be met with on our coasts, it seems, that only two species, viz., the dog fish and rough hound or morgay are ever prepared for food, and even the latter is rarely, if ever, eaten fresh. The dog fish salted and dried, we have been assured by those who have partaken of it, is a most excellent fish, particularly the belly part, which

resembles, and, in the opinion of our informants, fully equals that of the salmon. These fish are cured by opening and splitting them by the back, leaving the abdominal parts entire. The rough hound or morgay is cured in the same way.

The White Shark is rarely, though sometimes met with off our coasts, having probably followed some ship thither; in this country it is rejected by all, both gentle and simple, on account of its propensity for feeding on human flesh whenever the opportunity occurs, so that nothing short of sheer necessity could make us partake of any portion of "*the creature*," as a celebrated poet has been pleased to style this voracious monster. We are however informed that the flesh is far from disagreeable, and bears a strong resemblance to veal.

The Sturgeon, though a most peaceful fish, bears some resemblance in shape to the shark tribe, particularly in the projecting snout and situation of the mouth, which is placed just beneath the eyes. It is unnecessary for us to give any particular description of this fish, which from its large size is usually sold cut up in portions at the fish-monger's shops, and from its extreme scarcity it fetches a high price. It is capable of being cooked in a variety of ways which will be fully discussed bye and bye.

The proof of goodness in raw sturgeon is that it should cut clean and present a white appearance which should be contrasted with the blueness both of its veins and gristle: a brown or yellowish cast in these parts, denote the reverse. If kept too long, there is a very disagreeable taint which is never found when it is perfectly fresh.

It is from the hard roe of this fish, that the caviar is usually composed, though, sometimes, as we have already remarked, it is made from the spawn of the grey carp, as it seems it also is of the hard roe of the grey mullet.

The Sea Wolf.—Of this fish we can offer no opinion of our own, it being one of the few we have never had an opportunity of exercising our gastronomic judgment upon, and from its cat-like head, and repulsive appearance we do not think we should very readily have made the attempt.

According to Mr. Neil, as quoted by Mr. Yarrell, those who have the good sense to overcome a silly prejudice, caused by an unprepossessing exterior, find it good food; Mr. Hoy, Mr. Low, and Mr. Donovan, three eminent ichthyologists have borne their testimony to the excellence of its flesh, which the latter pronounces delicious. How absurd then, is it thus to cast away a valuable article of

food, because its external covering is unpleasant to the eye ?

" For 'tis the savour forms the test of merit,
Which, when with wholesome qualities combin'd
Should with all thankfulness be eaten ;
If mere exterior is to claim the palm,
Then must the woodcock to the parrot yield,
And the gay leopard supersede the deer.
But as the mind marks man and not his clothing,
So for our table should we choose those things
Whose goodly qualities are there display'd,
Nor deem their virtues less, because forsooth
Their former garb but ill contents the eye ;
Do not foul ways oft lie through fertile lands,
And richest mines beneath the meanest soils ?

But lest quoting from the muses beguile us too far from our subject, we will speedily resume it, by giving such a description of this wolf fish as may enable any of our readers, who may chance to fall in with it, at once to recognize it, it being far from a general fish, and very rarely exposed for sale in the market.

It grows to a large size, sometimes attaining as much as seven or eight feet in length. It is a fish of a long make, something like that of the ling, only that it has a head like a cat, and possessing most powerful jaws armed with large teeth, which give it a truly ferocious appearance. The back fin begins just behind the head, and extends nearly to the tail : the anal fin commences at the vent

and terminate just under the dorsal one: the tail fin is rounded at the end: the pectoral fins are short and remarkably wide: but the ventral fins are entirely wanting.

It is covered with small scales and slime, and the upper parts, as also the back fin is mottled with a mixture of grey and brown, whilst the lower part is white.

SECTION XV.

HOW TO CHOOSE SALT FISH.

The fishes that are usually salted dry, are the ling, cod, hake, whiting and rawlin pollock, and whiting.

Ling and Cod ought to appear of a light colour and perfectly dry, but should not feel hard to the touch: they should be free from dark spots or mildew, and where these dark spots occur they should be always cut out before the fish is dressed: the like observations apply also to other salt fish. They

should also be thick and stout, particularly behind the head, and this stoutness should be preserved even to the very tail.

The most esteemed ling are those taken on the coasts of Scilly, Penzance, and at St. Ives, in Cornwall; but the best cured fish of the kind we have met with, are those preserved at Polperro, which is a fishing station rather farther to the Eastward in that County. These fish are less dry and hard, than those preserved elsewhere, as are also the Polperro cod, and every other kind of salt fish; but the quantity salted in at the latter place is not considerable enough to answer any great demand for the article.

The Cod Fish taken on the coast of Newfoundland, are neither so large or so good as those cured on the Cornish coasts, nor is their flesh of so white a colour, but still we consider them next to our cod and ling, and superior to either the pollacks or hakes.

Dried Salmon should look very thick about the shoulders, and should be deep bodied throughout. It should also look very red when cut, otherwise it is a bad fish. It is indeed a too frequent practice to salt and dry unseasonable salmon, and to impart a red colour by dint of saltpetre and other ingredients, but this is very different from the real

redness of the fish ; still, a lean long bodied fish should always be rejected.

Red Herrings should look very bright and shining, like burnished metal, and stiff; if limp, and dull in colour, and particularly if soft about the belly parts they are ill cured, and will never eat well ; the like observations apply to most other small fishes that are cured dry.

Pilchards should look firm, but these fish are rarely to be met with ill cured, though, from their strong and rancid taste, few persons, except the poorer classes, can be prevailed upon to taste them a second time.

Fishes in pickle should look clean and free from spots or bruises, and should feel elastic and firm to the touch.

Anchovies should be firm and hard over the belly, and should be of a red colour under the skin. If soft and of a brown colour they are bad. The smaller ones are considered the best ; but those who can afford it would do wisest to purchase those that are sold in bottles, which are by far the best. Those prepared by Messrs Crosse and Blackwell, we have found excellent, yet very probably other houses may supply an article equally good.

All kinds of salt fish, whether dried or in pickle, require some preparation previous to cooking them; but this subject we must defer to the next chapter, which we purpose devoting solely to the consideration of the cleaning and preparation of fish previously to its being cooked.

SECTION XVI.

HOW TO CHOOSE SHELL FISH.

Crabs and Lobsters are frequently purchased alive, and this is generally the more prudent course in the vicinity of fishing stations, as by that means you not only insure the freshness of the article, but avoid the possibility of buying such as may have died a natural death in the well-boats or cobles in which they are kept.

The best criterion of the goodness of a crab, whether alive or dead, is the redness of

the shell, a clean appearance on the lower side, and the absence of spots and bruises. A dirty yellowish brown back, and spots and bruises about the claws and beneath, is a sign of a watery and sickly condition. When dressed, the upper part should be of a deep red, and there should be a spring and elasticity about the claws. If they hang loose, the fish is either stale or has died a natural death previously to being boiled.

The female is smaller than the male, and may be known from it by the claws being smaller, and the flap or tail much wider than in the male. The female is generally considered as the inferior, though some who are partial to the cream, give it a preference; and we certainly consider it affords the best crab sauce, but in other respects we do not consider it equal to the male fish.

Crabs and lobsters come in about the time that oysters go out, and may be considered in good season from April to October.

Always choose your crabs by weight, as if only fresh the heavier they weigh the better they are, for a weighty crab is always a good one.

The like remark also applies to lobsters. These are in season at the same time as the crabs. When alive, their shells should be

hard and firm : if soft and thin the fish is full of water. The male is known from the female, by the superior size of the claws, and having a narrower tail, and which is stiff and hard ; whilst that of the female is soft and broad. The latter is in best season just as the rudiments of the spawn begin to appear, at which time a fine rich coral will be found in the head, which disappears as the eggs increase in size. Many however prefer the male or cock lobster, the flesh of which is generally firmer, and, if in prime order, it also presents a finer red when dressed.

When boiled, the best way of testing the freshness, is to try the spring of the tail, which is strong and elastic if the fish is fresh : if slack and loose, it is either stale or watery, and is in either case worthless.

The same rules apply also to *cray* fish.

Prawns and Shrimps should also be elastic ; the flesh moist, and the skin well filled out : if dry and shrunk, they are stale ; and if soft, slender, and watery, they are in bad condition.

All these fish are in best order when the hard roe first appears and whilst the coral remains in the head.

A great deal depends upon the careful

boiling both of prawns and shrimps, which we shall give full directions about hereafter.

The goodness of *Oysters* depends chiefly on the grounds from which they are taken, or those on which they are afterwards placed previously to being brought to market; of these the Colchester, or as they are termed, natives rank the first, not only as possessing the most delicious flavour, but for their size and fatness in proportion to their diminutive shells. The large shelled oysters are rarely good, for even if fattened, they have usually a strong flavour. Oysters taken on muddy bottoms often imbibe a disagreeable taste; and thin oysters that scarcely half fill up the shell are always rank and ill flavoured, whilst those taken in rivers that are affected by the waters from copper mines, are absolutely poisonous; yet, most of these defects may be cured by devoting a little attention to the cleansing and feeding your oysters for a week or even a lesser time before you require them, as the short time in which these shell-fish will fatten and become purified from their former impurities seems almost miraculous, but which with very little care can always be accomplished.

The best mode we are acquainted with for fattening and cleansing oysters, is to place

them on their flat sides in a pan, with sufficient water, not only to cover them, but, to fill the pan nearly to the brim. If fresh water is used then a hand-full or more of salt, proportioned to the size of the vessel, should be cast in. This will be unnecessary where salt-water is used. The water should be changed once every day, and the oysters should be fed, either by casting a hand-full of flour, barley meal, or oat meal into the water, to which may be added, about the same quantity of wheaten bran. By this means you will find a considerable improvement even in the course of a couple of days, and by the expiration of five or six days they will be perfectly fat; in which state, with care, they may be kept for upwards of a fortnight, yet, after a week or ten days, they generally begin to decline. Every shell should be daily looked to, and if any should be found to remain open, they should be speedily removed, and the sooner the rest are dressed the better they are likely to prove. A cool cellar is the best place to keep them in.

Oysters, there is an old and a true saying, are always in season as long as there is an R in the month.

Muscles and Cockles should be full in the

shell. The former, if taken in a muddy bottom, often acquires a taint that cannot easily be eradicated, but cockles so affected will soon become pure, if kept for three or four days in clear salt-water with a clean bottom. Neither oysters, muscles, or cockles, are fit to be eaten if the shells become open, as they do when the fish within it expires, and when you perceive several in that state, it is a pretty sure proof that the remainder are not in a very healthy condition.

CHAPTER III.

HOW TO CLEAN AND PRESERVE FISH.

SECTION I.

HOW TO CLEAN FISH.

The cleaning of fish is a highly important matter, though one very little attended to; this operation, by no means an agreeable one, being generally delegated to unskilful hands, who take little pains or trouble to execute the task in a masterly manner, the consequence of which is, that many excellent fish are all but spoiled, and not unfrequently the eye meets with something that has been left

behind, by no means calculated to improve the appetite. The great thing to be attended to in the preparation of fish, is to cleanse away every particle that is offensive, and yet, to do this in such a manner that the fish may retain its stiffness; which is frequently destroyed by the knocking about and handling it whilst the process is going on; by this means the firmness and fine flavour if not wholly destroyed is in a great degree impaired. Another thing to be kept in mind, is that many different kinds of fishes require to be opened in a different manner: some require great pains to be taken in the scalding of them or cleansing them from their slime; others, again, may be dressed without undergoing this process at all, or even being gutted, and some there are, as fresh-water eels for example, that require to be stripped of their external skins altogether.

In cleaning fish a pump of clear spring water is a great advantage as the force of the water pumped over the fish, will wash off every thing that is required without any of the rubbing or scrubbing that might otherwise be requisite.

As a general rule for cleaning all fish: lay your fish flat on its side, either on a board or flat stone; hold it firm and steady by grasp-

ing it about the head and shoulders with your left hand, and scrape off all the scales and slime with your right; which having done, turn it on the reverse side and do the like, then cut off the fins, and if you have a pump at hand, pump over the fish just sufficiently to wash off any slime or loose scales that may still adhere to it, then open the fish and extract the intestines, and be careful to scrape out the blood that lodges about the back bone; then wash the fish either by the pump or in a pan of clear water—taking care to handle it as little as possible—which as soon as done, take your fish out of the water and hang it up by the head 'till required for use. Never leave a fish one moment in the water after it is thoroughly washed; by this means the flavour is often very materially injured.

All the cod kind require great care in cleaning particularly in cleansing the back bone from blood, which spoils the appearance of the sound, and sometimes renders it too unsightly to be eaten. To prevent all these consequences, the fish must be cut open for some distance below the vent: the sound on one side should be carefully cut off with a sharp knife, as close as possible to the back bone, leaving it attached to the opposite side, and then the blood on the interstices of the back

bone may be scraped out with the point of a knife, or scrubbed out with a small brush; by this means not only can the blood be eradicated, but the sound itself will present a much more agreeable appearance and can be more easily helped without injuring the appearance of the other parts of the fish.

It is a very frequent practice to extract the back bone of a hake, which is managed by first opening the fish and after disembowelling it, to insert the finger and thumb of the right hand betwixt the vertebræ just behind the poll, and so draw out the back bone entire from the flesh, without one single morsel adhering to it; the head is then cut off and cast aside. We are not aware that the back bone can be extracted from any other kind of fish by this mode of treatment.

All kinds of flat fish should likewise be cut down below the vent, otherwise some portion of the intestines are often found to remain, which, to say the least, has a very disgusting appearance, though we have known persons who have eaten it supposing it to be the spawn!

Before attempting to scale perch, weevers, gurnards, or any fish possessing spines, the safest course is first to cut off the spines, otherwise a severe puncture may be the consequence.

Fishes that are to be dressed in their scales, should be dipped in water and the slime rubbed off with a coarse towel, taking care only to rub from the head downwards, for if rubbed the contrary way some portion of the scales would be displaced, which would in a great measure counteract the effect intended to be produced by dressing the fish with this coating. Pilchards should be dressed without being wiped at all, whilst sprats which are better when scaled, should be rubbed with a cloth as the best means of getting them off without bruising the fish.

Sprats, launces, and many other small fishes are best cleaned by cutting off the head just below the collar bone, and at the same time drawing out the intestines without ripping open the bodies.

Mackerel and gar fish, if intended to be fried, should be opened by being split through the back to the very tail, as should also all fish intended to be cured whether in pickle or dried; but whittings, small trout, parrs, perch, ruffes, and most other small fish should be opened at the belly. In preparing trout, care must be taken to scrape the back bone clean, otherwise the blood collected there will have a black and muddy appearance that is extremely disagreeable to the eye.

Flounders, though a soft and watery fish, may be much improved by preparing them with a little care and attention. To manage this, get your flounders as fresh as possible : if alive kill them, either by cutting the throat or knocking on the head ; then cut off the tail, and dorsal and anal fins, close to the body, and hang them up for the rest of the day by the head : on the following morning, skin them, gut them, and hang them up again, and expose them to the wind and air, so that they may get thoroughly dry, then cut them in pieces and fry them.

Plaice are considerably improved by being beaten with a flat piece of wood or a rolling-pin, which, strange as it may appear, makes them eat more firmly, and takes away a great deal of the watery and flabby appearance these fish are so often found to possess.

Soles are usually skinned on the dark side only : the pale side should be carefully scaled, which is often done in a very slovenly manner, and sometimes omitted altogether. The dark skin should never be thrown away, as dried and preserved, a small portion of it is the best thing we are acquainted with for fining coffee.

Red mullets are usually dressed without either being scaled or gutted ; but if very

fresh, it is an improvement to extract the intestines, making an aperture for that purpose just below the gills, and carefully drawing out the inside, throwing away the garbage and replacing the liver: but this can only be managed when the fish is very fresh, and the liver very firm; and should never be attempted after the fish has been half-a-dozen hours out of water. Another way of preserving the liver and getting rid of the garbage is to gut the fish, not making too large an aperture, which being sewn up again, dress the fish in the ordinary way; then cleaning the liver from the objectionable parts of the internals, boil it for a couple of minutes and either mix it up with the melted butter, or serve it up in a small plate by itself.

Skates, Thornbacks, and all fishes of that class should be skinned; this process is considerably accelerated by previously scalding the fish in hot water: the appearance is improved by cutting across the cartilages, and so dividing the flesh into strips of an inch or so in width; after this is done, keep them in salt and water for four or five hours, which will extract every rank taste, and give the whole a more white and delicate appearance.

Fresh-water eels are usually skinned before they are dressed, but this should never be

attempted with congers. Skinning eels whilst alive is as unnecessary as cruel, and notwithstanding the apparent tenacity of life in these fishes, they may, as we have already remarked,* be killed, by merely dividing the spine just behind the head. To skin eels in the most easy manner, first cut through the skin all round just below the gills with a sharp knife, then stick either an iron skewer, or the prong of a stout fork through the head above, and so holding on by that part with your right hand, take a coarse towel in your left, and grasping the fish tightly below where you have cut through the skin, you may strip it off as easy as a stocking. In Ireland, we hear, it is a frequent practice to dress eels with their jackets on, merely scrubbing off the slime, which we have been told is the preferable mode of dressing these fishes; we, ourselves, never ate eels so prepared but once, and this occurred entirely through the cook's ignorance, which added to exceeding bad cookery in every other respect, produced so nauseous a mess, that nothing short of the peril of absolute starvation could induce us again to venture upon a dish prepared in a similar manner.

Salt Fish requires attention in being pro-

perly soaked in water previously to being dressed, and it is from neglecting this that salt fish is not so highly esteemed as an article of food as it deserves to be.

We often see a piece of ling, cod, or hake, nearly as hard as a board, and as salt as the very brine itself, from having been carelessly thrown for a few hours in water scarcely perhaps sufficient to cover it, from whence it is committed to the pot, and boiled away at a gallop, until the cook believes it sufficiently done to be brought to table. When so treated the best salt fish would be unfit to be eaten. To prepare a ling for table, it should lay for twelve hours at least, in water, more than sufficient to cover it entirely, and being then taken out and well scrubbed with a hard brush or coarse cloth, it should be placed either on a stone or flat board to drain for six or eight hours; after which it should again be put into water, which, if you can keep about lukewarm is all the better, and let it remain ten or twelve hours more, when it will swell considerably and become pliant and tender—Warm milk and water is considered to soften and improve both the flavour and appearance.—Some add vinegar to the water as a means of extracting the salt. Two soakings, however, are at any rate necessary

to get rid of the salt and rancid taste: one soaking, for however long a time, only makes a kind of pickle, the water itself becoming almost as salt as the very brine, being in itself sufficient to impart a saltiness to any fresh fish that might be cast into it. Dried cod requires about one half the soaking at each time as salt ling, unless the cod be a very large one, when it will require to be soaked nearly as long as a ling. Smaller fish do not require so much soaking; still it is always better to change the water; or if this cannot be conveniently done, as where fish are placed in water over-night to be ready for an early breakfast the next morning, then throw a wine-glass or two of vinegar into the water, and taking the fish out the first thing in the morning, hang it up by the tail to drain. Dried salmon does not require much soaking: in fact, an hour in luke-warm water or even less will be sufficient, as, if allowed to remain long it will lose its flavour, but it should be hung up to drain for at least half-an-hour before it is cooked. Red herrings should be merely washed in hot water and allowed to soak afterwards in water about three minutes; many however consider that pouring hot small beer over them, and allowing them to remain in the liquid untill it becomes cold is

the better plan. In either case, if time permits, they are better for draining for a short time previously to being dressed.

SECTION II.

HOW TO CURE FISH.

Notwithstanding that the business of curing fish is a task that usually devolves upon the fish-curers residing at the different fishing stations, we consider it to be still our duty to lay all we know on this subject before our readers, more particularly as on many parts of our coasts the curing process is carried on in a much more slovenly way than in others. When fish are only intended to be kept for a few days, then merely a light sprinkling of dry salt will be sufficient and far preferable

to throwing your fish into pickle, which will soon destroy the curdy appearance between the flakes; neither is it a good plan to strew salt over your fish laying them flat in a dish, which will produce nearly the same effect. The best way of powdering a fish so as to keep it for a few days, is to take out the eyes, and fill up the apertures with good dry salt, rubbing in at the same time, a small quantity over the rest of the fish, particularly about the inside, and about the interstices of the back bone. In warm weather it is the better plan to lay open the fish on one side of the back bone, and rub in the salt there plentifully, otherwise the fish will begin to decompose about that part before the salt reaches it, and thus taint the whole fish. In very hot or close weather, if you intend to keep your fish more than a couple of days, the prudent course would be to cut out the back bone altogether.

If you wish to avoid making your fish too salt, then instead of employing so great a quantity of that article, supply its deficiency with pepper, which, particularly with fish intended either for broiling or frying, imparts a very agreeable flavour: and which may still be further improved by the addition of a little ground mace or alspice.

If you are desirous of preserving your fish in a fresh state, the best plan is partially to dress it in the mode you intend it hereafter to appear at table, by which means it will keep good for several days together, without salt or other preserving materials, than it would otherwise have done.

Parboiling salmon soon after it is taken is by far the best means of preserving its curdy flakes, where you are compelled to keep it several days. The usual and by no means a bad plan of preserving fresh salmon, is to wash out the inside daily with vinegar, and afterwards to cast pepper over the same parts, which is far better than salt for that purpose, as the latter extracts both colour and flavour from the fish.

When fish are intended to be cured for any length of time then considerable care is requisite, this being a process that requires time, and any neglect at any future period, might render all your previous trouble unavailing. The fish that are usually cured dry, are cod, ling, hake, torsk, and in fact every fish of the cod tribe ; salmon, salmon peel, all the ray tribes, and one or two kinds of dog fish.

The ray tribe are cured by being first well scrubbed to get off the slime, immersed in and kept for ten days or a fortnight in a strong

pickle of brine ; they are then taken out and submitted to a second scrubbing and again plunged into newly prepared prickle, where after remaining four or five days more, they are hung up to dry in sheds, being exposed in the open air and sun whenever the opportunity occurs.

Ling, cod, hake, and the rest of the cod tribe are split open by the back, and are like the rays, immersed in pickle for about ten days or a fortnight ; they are then taken out, and being well rubbed with dry salt, are hung up to dry : a small stick being thrust in as we see in the carcasses of sheep and lambs in the butcher's shambles, to keep the fish in a proper position ; as well to preserve a better appearance, as to place it in a favorable position for drying. When the weather permits, the fish is generally exposed to the sun, by which means the drying process is considerably accelerated, but care must be taken to secure it from the rain which would damage it very considerably.

When salmon or salmon peel are cured, it is an improvement to make the pickle with equal portions of salt and salt petre, as it also is with any fish you may wish to smoke as well as to dry. This smoking process is a great improvement to salmon and salmon peel,

and may be done with litter in the same way as hams or bacon is cured.

When fish are kept in pickle only, then the fish at the time it would have been taken out for drying should be thoroughly washed,—pumping over it is the best plan,—and new pickle being made, it may be kept in it 'till required for use.

CHAPTER. IV.

ON THE COOKERY OF FISH.

And now we come to the most important part of our subject; viz:—the cookery of the fish themselves, which if indifferently done, however good the article may be, can never make a palatable dish. Well aware, however, are we, of the extreme difficulty of attempting to make a good cook by dint of mere printed directions, yet at the same time we do trust, that however far we may fall short in reaching so desirable an object, the remarks we shall be enabled to offer, and the various receipts we shall bring before the notice of our readers, will afford some useful information, and furnish at least some valuable assistance upon this most essential portion of the cookery department.

SECTION I.

HOW TO BOIL FISH.

Boiling, though so simple a process, is one that more fish are spoiled outright in undergoing than by any other mode of cookery whatever. What we would ask can be more unsightly or unpalatable than a fish sent to table a mere mass of rags and tatters, except perhaps one sent up half raw ; both of which we have too often witnessed, and not unfrequently with the addition of being covered with the scum of the boiler, and half deluged in hot water, which has been soused into the dish with it. One great cause why fish are so often ill boiled, is that they are merely cast into the fish kettle, and being covered up, are allowed to remain there a certain time without any consideration as to

the rate the water is boiling away at; the cook's whole attention in the interim being entirely absorbed in some other matter. To boil a fish of any size or thickness, it should be put into cold water, and as soon as it begins to boil strongly, it should be checked by throwing in a small quantity more of cold water, which must either be continued from time to time, or the kettle removed from so close a contact with the fire, so that the water may boil at a gentle rate till the fish is wholly done throughout. If, on the other hand, the water is allowed to bubble away fiercely, the skin of the fish would be split into rags, at the same time when the flesh near the backbone would be utterly raw. Care also must be taken to keep the kettle covered, lest soot or other dirt should fall into it, merely from time to time removing the cover for the purpose of skimming off any scum that may arise upon the surface.

When the fish is sufficiently dressed, lift up the fish plate gently; then holding it over the boiler allow the water to drain off, then place it in a dish upon a fish drain upon which should be a clean napkin, taking especial care that not a single drop of water accompanies the fish. Do not dish up your fish till the moment before it is to be sent to

table, as if placed under a cover the damp arising from the steam, will counteract in a great measure, the good effect of your placing the fish dry on the dish. If possible, therefore, it should be so contrived, that the fish should be just ready to be dished up to be placed at once upon the table ; but if circumstances should prevent this, the fish may still be kept warm for some considerable time without injury, by merely allowing it to remain on the tin plate on which it was boiled, which should be placed across the top of the kettle, the upper side of the fish being covered over with a clean cloth.

Salt, vinegar, and horse radish, thrown into the water improves the appearance of the fish, and is considered to prevent the skin from breaking.

Ling, cod, and hake, should never be dressed whole, as the portions near the tail being thinner than the upper parts, the former would be boiled to rags before the other parts were half dressed ; the common practice therefore, is to dress fish of this kind in separate portions.

To boil a Cod's Head and Shoulders.

Before placing the head and shoulders in the

kettle, you should first bind some broad tape three or four times round the head, to prevent the cheeks from breaking away, as they are otherwise apt to do; then putting the portion of fish into a kettle of cold water, with a handful of salt, a bundle of sweet herbs, a couple of wine glasses of vinegar, and a little shred horse radish, watch attentively to see when the water boils, which checking as before directed, keep it just on the boil till it is done. A moderate sized piece will take about half an hour. You may easily perceive when the fish is dressed enough by lifting the drain and inserting a fish slice by the back bone, when if you can lift the flesh clear off it, and it appears done, the fish is ready for the table. Cod, if crimped, will take a lesser time than if dressed in a solid piece. When you take up the fish unwind the tape gently, and dish up your fish as before directed. If you dress either spawn or the liver, it should not be dressed in the body of the fish, but be placed beside it in the kettle, otherwise it will not be done enough. The spawn, if large, will even take longer to dress thoroughly than the fish itself. Garnish with scraped horse radish, and place the liver and roe, if any, by the side. If the cod has a soft roe, it should be fried, and the boiled fish garnished

with it ; but as a general rule boiled and fried should never appear in the same dish.

Oyster sauce is the proper accompaniment to a boiled cod's head and shoulders ; next come cockle sauce, shrimp, crab, lobster, or anchovy ; though there is no fish sauce whatever that we are acquainted with that may not be eaten with it. Codlings may be dressed boiled entire ; previously to dressing them, it is a good plan to take out the eyes and fill up the sockets with salt, as they eat much better when powdered with salt for a day or two, previously to their being cooked.

*Another mode of dressing a Cod's Head
and Shoulders.*

Boil the head and shoulders about two thirds of the former time. then taking it up and stripping the skin carefully off, place it before a brisk fire basting it well with butter, and dredging with flower, and as soon as the froth rises, strew fine bread crumbs over it, and continue the basting till it is thoroughly done. Then serve it up, garnished with fried parsley, or scraped horse radish and sliced lemon, and eat it with the same sauces as with the head and shoulders simply boiled.

A Third Way

Of cooking up a cod's head, is, after stripping off the skin, simply to dredge it well with flour, and laying some lumps of butter upon it, to bake it for a quarter of an hour or so in an oven, or brown it over by the aid of a salamander.

When cod or ling has been salted for several days, then egg sauce is preferable to any other.

To boil Ling.

Ling may be boiled in exactly the same way as a cod, yet as the skin of the former about the head is more firm than that of the cod, it is unnecessary to bind round the cheeks, in the manner above pointed out. The head and shoulders of a ling may be submitted to the par-baking process in the same manner as that portion of the cod; but as the skin of the ling is so delicious a thing, we would by no means recommend our readers to adopt the latter mode of cookery, unless in those places where ling being as plentiful as blackberries, a change in the way of cookery might be advisable, lest the appetite should

become cloyed by too often partaking of the same dish. The same sauces may be used as with cod.

To boil Pollacks, Hakes, Haddocks, and Whiting.

These fish if not very large may be boiled entire. They do not take quite so long a time in boiling as a cod or ling of the same weight. They may be eaten with the same sauce as the cod; mustard mixed up with melted butter, is particularly adapted for whiting; and can only be exceeded by the recently invented Cornubian sauce. *

To boil Salt Fish.

These fish when well watered as before directed† should be boiled slowly in water, with a glass or two of vinegar and some shred horse-radish, but without any salt. When dressed it may be served up strewed over either with horse-radish or egg sauce. It may be garnished with boiled parsnips. Egg

* This combination of all sorts of good things, is prepared by Mr. T. S. Eyre, Chemist and Druggist, Launceston, who before offering it to the public, submitted it to us for our approval, and we certainly entertain an high opinion of its excellence for every purpose of cookery. It may now be procured from all fish sauce vendors throughout the kingdom.

† See Ante p. 163.

sauce, mustard mixed up with melted butter, or the cornubian sauce, are the only proper accompaniments to salt fish.

To boil Cod's Sounds and Tongues.

Having first steeped your sounds and tongues for three or four hours in warm milk and water, scrape and clean them thoroughly. Then put them in a saucepan with fresh milk and water, and boil them gently 'till they become tender; then serve them up accompanied with egg sauce. The same sauces should be eaten with them as with salt fish. You may garnish either with fried parsley or shred horse-radish.

Mrs. Elizabeth Raffald, has informed us of a mode of dressing the sounds so as to look, as she says, "like little turkies," but though in reality they bear about as much resemblance to a whale, still they form a dish by no means to be passed lightly over. These sounds should be about half boiled, and being allowed to become cold, should then be opened and filled with a forcemeat, composed of chopped oysters, bread crumbs mixed up with the yolk of two eggs, and seasoned with nutmeg, mace, pepper and salt, which being carefully skewered in, and in a form as near

as circumstances will allow, to a little turkey, should be larded down each side, as you would do a turkey's breast, and being then well dredged over with flour, must be committed to a Dutch oven and roasted before the fire, and when sufficiently dressed, must be served up with oyster sauce poured over them.

In addition to the above there are various other modes by which cod sounds and tongues, may be made to appear to advantage at table, and which will be duly noticed under the different heads of cookery, we purpose treating of hereafter.

Basse, mullet, and perch, should be boiled whole, in the same manner as codlings and whiting. The two former may be eaten with crab, lobster, shrimp sauce, or anchovy; the latter with soy, ketchup, cornubian sauce, chili or common white wine vinegar, to the latter may be added sliced cucumber.

All the gurnard tribe when boiled should be accompanied with crab sauce, though there are few sauces that they eat amiss with. Boiled mackerel should be eaten with either plain melted butter, or which may be accompanied with anchovy, soy, or cornubian sauce. But the proper sauce is fennell chopped fine, and mixed up in melted butter. Boiled gooseberries are considered an agree-

able accompaniment to boiled mackerel ; and sliced cucumber seems to be even still more highly esteemed.

To boil Salmon.

Salmon, if large, should be dressed in portions like a cod ; if small it may be dressed whole, and this is best done by fixing the tail in the mouth by means of a skewer, and boiling it in a turbot kettle ; the fish being sent to table resting on its belly side with the back uppermost. The liver and spawn may be placed on the same dish. The latter it must be observed like that of the cod and ling, takes even a longer time to dress than the fish itself, and if eaten underdone is extremely unwholesome. The salmon, like cod, if dressed in a large piece, and uncrimped, should be put into cold water, and boil gradually ; and if dressed in thin slices, it should be put at once into hot water, when after permitting it to remain about a minute, lift up the drain and let the fish remain out of the water for about a couple of minutes, repeating this three or four times, which causes the curd to set, and the fish to eat more crisply ; then let it boil away at a moderate pace 'till sufficiently done.

The best sauce for salmon is either lobster, shrimp, or anchovy ; neither oyster, cockle, or even crab sauce seem adapted to it ; it may, however, be eaten with any kind of ketchup, or soy, as also with vinegar. Sliced cucumber may also be eaten with it. Some give a preference to capers mixed up in melted butter in the same way as when eaten with boiled mutton.

Trout and Salmon Peel.

These should be boiled whole, and eaten with the same sauce as the salmon ; they should be scaled before they are dressed, and should be put into cold water and allowed to boil gradually ; some vinegar and scraped horse-radish should be put into the water with them, and in taking them up great care should be taken to drain off the water and not to break the skin.

To boil Tench.

This fish should be boiled in the same manner as trout or salmon peel ; garnish with sliced lemon and serve them up with chopped parsley mixed up in melted butter. Anchovy, soy, cornubian sauce or vinegar,

may be eaten if preferred, and it may be accompanied with slices of cucumber. Carp, may be dressed in the same way ; but roach, dace, and few if any of the rest of the carp tribe, are fit for boiling, being most of them soft, watery, and insipid, and therefore better adapted for broiling or frying.

To boil Eels.

Eels should never be dressed in this way unless they are of a large size ; they should of course be skinned and cut up into small pieces, (the head being thrown away,) and should be served up with parsley and butter, some portion of which should be thrown over them. We consider the cornubian sauce to be particularly adapted for boiled eels, or in fact eels dressed in any shape, as it counteracts the viscidty which so many persons complain of in these fish.

To boil Herrings.

These when scaled and thoroughly cleaned, should be rubbed over with vinegar and salt, and having their tails fixed in their mouths by means of a small skewer, should be boiled for about ten or twelve minutes, and should be eaten with parsley and butter, or mustard mixed up with the melted butter.

To boil a Pike.

Pike when boiled should always be dressed

with a forcemeat pudding in their bellies, which should be prepared as follows : bread crumbs ; a small portion of sweet herbs and parsley, chopped up very fine ; a little lemon peel, a good sized piece of butter, mixed up with the yolks of a couple of eggs, and seasoned with nutmeg, cayenne, common pepper, and salt ; a few oysters either fresh or pickled cut up fine will make a valuable addition ; sew the pudding up in the belly of the fish, skewer its tail in its mouth, and then place the fish with the belly downwards on the fish drain. Garnish with sliced lemon, and serve it up with plain melted butter. No sauce whatever should be eaten with this dish.

Pipers, and all the gurnard tribe, if large, may be dressed in this way, as also basse, bream, and fresh water perch. With these anchovy sauce, but no other may be permitted.

To boil a Turbot.

Great care is requisite in boiling a turbot, for being a thick fish it requires some time to dress through, when if not properly attended to, the skin will become cracked, and so the whole appearance of the fish destroyed, as well as its goodness deteriorated. To prevent this, some preliminary steps are necessary, both in preparing the water as well as the fish itself before it is put into it.

In the first place see that the kettle is sufficiently large, then pouring into it a sufficient quantity of water to cover the fish, after throwing in a handful of salt, add to it a half a pint of vinegar, and cast in some pieces of shred horse-radish, and sweet herbs; boil these for some time so that the water may imbibe all the strength of these ingredients; then take off the kettle, and allow the water to become quite cool. Then take your turbot, and scoring it just through the skin on the dark side, (which is the most effectual means of preventing its cracking on the other,) place your fish in the kettle with the dark side downwards, and as soon as the water boils check it as before directed, and take especial care from time to time to skim off the scum, as also to see that no blacks fall into the kettle. A moderate sized turbot will require about twenty minutes boiling, when done take care to drain it well, and place it on a napkin which must be laid on a fish drain. The spawn of a hen lobster spread over the upper part, gives it a very fine appearance; if this cannot be procured, scrape a little horse radish over it. Serve it up with lobster sauce if it can possibly be procured. Next to this, shrimp, or crab sauce may be eaten with it; as may also anchovy, soy, ketchup, or vinegar. In the summer months

shred cucumber may be eaten with it. Boiled turbot is excellent eaten cold with vinegar and cucumber.

Brills, plaice, and small holibut may be dressed in the same way as turbot; but as the two former fish are not so thick through as the turbot, they will not take quite so long a time in dressing. They may be eaten with the same sauce as the turbot, except that crab sauce is better adapted than any other for a plaice. It must be kept in mind that the holibut above alluded to, is not the same fish as that sold under that name at Plymouth, which in fact is the brill which we have just been speaking about.

The larger holibuts are usually boiled cut up in portions; and a turbot may be dressed in the same way if desired, as being a very solid fish it does not become water soaked when boiled in small pieces. The same sauce should accompany it as if dressed whole.

A piece of sturgeon may be boiled and served up in the same manner.

To boil Soles.

These should be first skinned, and may then be boiled in common spring water with a wine glass of vinegar, and a little salt cast into it. Care must be taken to skim off the scum. Serve up either with shrimp sauce

lobster, crab, or anchovy. You may if you please, strew it over with scraped horse radish.

To boil Scate.

This being prepared as above stated* should boil for about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. As the thinner parts will not require so long a time as the thicker, the latter should not be put in until a short time after the water boils. Crab sauce is by far the best to serve it up with; but if that cannot be procured you may substitute anchovy.

To boil Crabs, Lobsters, and Cray Fish.

Let your water boil up fiercely, then cast in a handful or two of salt and plunge in the fish; about a quarter of an hour will boil a large crab or lobster, and a lesser time in proportion to the size of the fish.

A crab may be killed by cutting off any portion between the joints of the legs, when it will speedily bleed to death; but if taken off at a joint, the contraction of the muscles will prevent the blood from flowing.

To boil Prawns and Shrimps,

These are often spoiled outright in undergoing this process, which if properly managed is a very simple one. First, having your water boiling away briskly, and with a handful or two of salt in it, cast in your prawns, which as soon as they are done enough, as they will be very speedily, will float to the surface; then empty them all out into a cullender, and as soon as the water has drained off throw them all into a dry towel, quickly rubbing in and spreading about a good quantity of salt amongst them whilst hot; which having done, wrap them up in the towel, and allow them to remain 'till quite cold.

To boil Cockles and Muscles.

These only require to be placed on a stew pan over a brisk fire; no water will be necessary, as the liquor oozing from them will be amply sufficient for the purpose. As soon as the shells open sufficiently to extract the fish they are sufficiently dressed.

SECTION II.

HOW TO FRY FISH.

Notwithstanding the miserable examples of fried fish we so frequently see on the tables of our acquaintance, there is no branch of the art of cookery more easy to attain if only a few essential points are carefully attended to. In the *first* place the fire must be free from smoke and yet not burn too fiercely. *Secondly*, the frying pan must be clean and not overworn in the service, as in the latter case the fish will be likely to be discoloured, and be apt to stick to it. *Thirdly*, the pan when placed on the fire should be moistened by throwing

in a small portion of butter or lard, which, when properly dissolved, must be wiped off again with a cloth before the fat in which the fish is to be fried is put in. *Fourthly*, the lard, oil, or whatever material the fish is to be fried in, must not be stinted in quantity, as it too frequently is; and this should not only be completely dissolved, but must be allowed to boil up for a minute or so before the fish is placed in the frying pan, which never should be done until all the frizzling and bubbling has wholly subsided. *Fifthly*, the fish should be previously well dried and folded up in a cloth, and either well floured, or thoroughly coated in egg and bread crumbs. *Sixthly*, when in the frying pan the fish must never be left a moment, and must fry at a moderate rate, neither too quick nor too slow, and when one side is done enough, you must turn it carefully over on the other, 'till that be also sufficiently cooked. When fried enough let all the fat drain off,—this is best done by means of a hair sieve,—and then place your fish in a dish, or on a napkin upon a fish-drain; but both fish-drain and napkin may be dispensed with on ordinary occasions. Oil is generally considered the best material to fry fish in; but we have found hog's lard to answer the purpose equally

well, added to which it is far less expensive. Beef and fresh pork dripping may also be used; but that of mutton is apt to impart a muttony taste to the fish, which by no means improves its flavour. Butter does not fry fish well, and should never be used except when the fish is merely par-fried as a preliminary stage of the stewing process, when good fresh butter is the only thing that ought to be employed. The fat in which the fish is fried, if poured into a basin of cold water will form in a hard substance on the surface, and may be employed again on a future occasion. These are the principal rules to be observed, which if carefully adhered to, will, after a few trials, enable any one who is really desirous of succeeding to get over any difficulty likely to occur in this most important branch of the culinary art.

To fry Cod.

The portion of cod best adapted for frying is the thin part about the tail, which should be split close to the bone. This may either be cut out, or one side may be fried with the bone adhering to it. This portion of the cod fish should be fried without egg and bread crumb, and may be served up with plain

butter, and eaten with anchovy, cornubian sauce, soy, or ketchup. If the thicker parts are fried, they should be cut in slices through the back bone, and may be dressed either with or without egg or bread crumb, and served up with the same sauces as above.

Large haddocks, ling, whiting pollack, as also *basse*, may be dressed in the same way; but the thicker portion of a hake must be prepared in a different manner as will be duly noticed hereafter.

To fry Codlings and small Haddocks.

Having well cleaned your fish, open them by the back, close to the back bone, leaving the belly part entire; then taking out the inside and thoroughly cleansing the back bone, flour and dry your fish as before directed, and fry them of a fine pale brown; garnish with fried parsley, and serve them up with melted butter and anchovy sauce. Small whiting pollack, whiting pouts, as also whiting, may be dressed in the same way; but we consider the two latter are better when cooked in the manner we shall next point out.

To fry Whiting.

Fix the tail in the mouth by means of a small skewer, though, frequently the sharp teeth of the fish itself are sufficient to keep it in that position; then having the fish perfectly dry, wet it with an egg and sprinkle it with fine bread crumbs, then place each fish carefully on its belly in the frying pan which must be well supplied with dripping; when done, garnish with fried parsley, and serve them up on a napkin, accompanied with melted butter. Anchovy, soy, cornubian sauce, ketchup, or vinegar may be eaten with them, as also mustard mixed up with the melted butter. Whitings when cooked in this manner are sometimes skinned previously to laying on the egg and bread crumbs.

In order that the fried parsley may look well, you should first wash it well in clear spring water, and afterwards throw it at once into the boiling dripping, which will crisp it sufficiently in a few seconds. If you allow it to remain too long, it will injure the fine colour.

The above mode of dressing whitings is rather adapted to those of a moderate size; the larger ones, when fried, are cut up into two or three pieces, and are frequently used

to garnish some larger kind of boiled fish. We, however, strongly condemn the practice of ever associating boiled and fried fish in the same dish, as the steam of the former is highly injurious to the latter, which ought always to be served up on a separate dish.

To fry Whiting-Pouts.

These fish, though bearing no high reputation, are delicious when nicely fried. They should be opened by the belly and fried whole, either with or without egg and bread crumb; they should be served up with melted butter and eaten with the same sauces as the whiting. *Very small whiting* and *rawlin pollack* are also better when fried entire in the mode above pointed out, than in any way whatever.

To fry Hake.

This fish should always be fried in cutlets, which should be managed as follows:—with a sharp knife split the fish through close to the back bone, which having extracted, cut your cutlets lengthwise with the fish, of about the same size as an ordinary veal cutlet, and drying the pieces well in a cloth, cover them

plentifully with egg and bread crumb ; and when dressed, serve them up in a clean napkin, and garnish with fried parsley. Melted butter, and the same sauces as for whiting may be eaten with it, and upon the whole, although as yet to fame unknown, it furnishes one of the most delicious dishes of fish that we are acquainted with.

You may, if you think proper, make a sauce peculiarly adapted to this dish, by cutting up the head and bones, and stewing them for some time in a small quantity of water, throwing in a fried onion, a few pickled mushrooms, some sweet herbs, a small piece of butter, a spare cutlet of the fish itself, or a small conger-eel or two, or even a little flounder : to this should be added a glass of wine, either white or red is immaterial. Season with pepper, salt, nutmeg, a squeeze of a lemon, and thicken with a little flour, a small portion of soy, ketchup, anchovy, or cornubian sauce, may be added. Let the whole stew 'till it becomes as thick as thin melted butter, and serve it up in boats with the fish.

To fry Eels.

Eels must be cut up in pieces before they are fried. If large they should be fried very

slowly as they take some time to be thoroughly done throughout : for the same reason there should be an ample supply of dripping. Egg and bread crumb should also be rubbed over them ; sometimes parsley or a few sweet herbs, shred very fine, are mixed up with the bread crumbs. The cornubian we have found by far the best sauce for fried eels, and this should be mixed up with melted butter ; but any other sauce or soy may be eaten with them ; many persons give a preference to parsley and butter as a corrective of the fat or luscious flavour, which is sometimes found too strong for delicate stomachs, and for this very reason we recommend the cornubian sauce, which has been prepared with a view to produce this very effect.

To fry Conger.

The smaller congers are fried in the same manner as eels, only without previously stripping off their skins ; but the portions near the tail are often thrown away, on account of the small bones that abound in those parts and prove exceedingly troublesome. The large congers are cut up in small pieces right through the spine, of about three quarters of an inch in thickness. To fry these properly

they should be first put in with a moderate quantity of dripping in order to extract the watery particles from the fish, which mixing with the fat will cause a considerable frizzling. Keep moving the pieces lest they adhere to the bottom of the pan; as soon as the frizzling begins to subside a little, pour out the contents of the pan, and after wiping it out with a cloth, put in fresh dripping, and as soon as it is thoroughly boiled up put in your fish again, and fry it to a fine pale brown. Serve it up with parsley and butter or fennel sauce. Anchovy, cornubian, or any other soy or pickle may be eaten with it. Conger may also be dressed in egg and cream, either alone or mixed up with fine shred parsley or sweet herbs.

To fry Lampreys.

The sea lamprey should be split up previously to frying, and the gristle that supplies the place of a back bone extracted: only the parts below the gill holes are fit to be eaten; the slime should be well scraped off, but the skin should be allowed to remain; parsley and butter is the best accompaniment.

The small river lampreys may be fried merely cut up in small pieces, but without

being split open ; first rubbing off the slime, and casting away the parts above the gill holes. Serve them up with fried parsley, and eat them with plain melted butter.

To fry Perch.

Perch, previously to being fried, should be opened by the belly, and all the fins cut close off ; care must previously be taken to scale them thoroughly ; then dry them in flour and fry them of a fine light brown. Serve them up with melted butter ; anchovy, cornubian sauce, soy, or ketchup, may be eaten with them. Ruffes and weevers may be fried in the same way, as may also small breams or shads ; but the larger ones should be broiled with their scales on in the manner we shall shortly hereafter point out.

To fry Basse and Mullet.

Very small basse and mullets,—that is those under a quarter of a pound,—should be fried in the same manner as perch ; above that size they should be split open by the back, and fried in the same way as before directed respecting codlings and small haddocks * ; the larger fish should be cut up in

steaks, and fried in the same manner as just before pointed out for dressing congers, and should be eaten with the same sauces.

A large mullet, if fried, should be cut up in small cutlets in the same manner as a hake, and served up in the same manner. Sliced cucumber is an agreeable addition when it can be procured.

To fry Wrasse.

Scale them thoroughly, and splitting them open by the back, pepper and salt them well, hang them up for three or four hours against a sunny wall to dry, and then fry them in plenty of dripping; use the same sauces as for fried whiting.

To fry Gurnards.

Gurnards of every kind, if fried, should be opened by the back, the slime and scales being previously scraped off, cut off all the fins; they must be well dried in flour, but no egg or bread crumbs ought to be used; they should be fried in the same manner as codlings, and served up with the same sauces; but in our humble opinion they eat better with crab sauce than any other kind whatever.

To fry Carp.

These fish are seldom fried except as a preparatory step to the stewing process; when they are dressed entirely by frying, they should be done in precisely the same way as the perch; and if the fish is in roe, the roes should be placed on each side the fish, and garnished with sliced lemon. The sauce, butter, and anchovy, with a squeezed lemon.

To fry Tench.

These fish may be fried in the same way, and should be served up with parsley and butter, or fennel sauce. In addition to this they eat very agreeably with any other soy or sauce that is used with other fish.

To fry Rudds, Bream, Roach, Dace, Chub, Barbel, and Gudgeons.

All these fish should be fried in the same manner as perch, and may be eaten with the same sauces, but a large barbel should be split in two, and well peppered and salted, which, with the addition of a little cornubian sauce mixed up in melted butter, with a

little cayenne pepper, will make a more palatable dish of fish of him, than we think can possibly be accomplished by any other means.

To fry Minnows, Loaches, and Bull-heads.

All these little fishes, when gutted, should be cleansed from slime, and their fins cut off, they should then be separately dressed in egg and well dredged with flour, and then carefully fried of a fine pale brown, when they will be almost equal to whitebait, presenting much the same appearance, and possessing much of the same flavour. Serve them up with a lemon cut in halves and from time to time squeeze a small portion of the juice over them. Eat them with brown bread and butter.

To fry Mackerel.

These fish must be opened by the back, and being thoroughly dried and well sprinkled with egg and bread crumb, should be carefully fried, and may be eaten either with parsley and butter, or fennel. Cornubian sauce is peculiarly well adapted to both fried and boiled mackerel, as it tends to

subdue the over richness, which causes these fish, if eaten in any quantity, to disagree with many constitutions : but they eat very pleasantly with anchovy, soy, or ketchup.

To fry Gar Fish or Long Noses.

These fish, after being thoroughly scaled and the fins cut off, should be split open by the back and the back bone taken out, then being cut in halves, should be thoroughly dried in flour, and fried in the same manner as codlings, and served up with plain melted butter ; they may also be eaten with the same sauces as mackerel, which they resemble very much in taste, though rather a dryer fish.

To fry Sand Launce.

These should be well dried in flour and fried 'till brown and crisp, and served up with plain melted butter ; no sauce whatever should be eaten with these fishes,—that is the little sand launce, not its bigger relative, —which, if dressed after being recently taken, afford one of the most delicious dishes the sea furnishes us with.

To fry Herrings.

These, after being scaled, must be opened by the belly, then taking out the inside, preserve the roe, which must be fried separately and not in the body of the fish.—Score the fish in three or four places on both sides to the very back bone, which will cause the watery particles, which so many except against these fish, to escape.—Flour them well, fry them thoroughly, and garnish with the roes. Fried onions are often served up with them. The male or soft-roed herrings are far superior to the females; the flesh of the former presenting a milk-white appearance, the latter a dirty milk-and-water cast. Cornubian sauce or mustard mixed up with melted butter are the best accompaniments to fried herrings. Shads of both kinds may be fried in precisely the same manner as herrings.

To fry Pilchards.

These should be fried without any previous preparation. The natives on the coasts on which these fish are usually taken, commonly eat them with salt and water, with a few slices of raw onion. We, ourselves, prefer plain melted butter mixed up with a little

vinegar and mustard. Before attempting to eat the fish, the scaly coating should be taken off, which with the assistance of a knife and fork, with a little care, you may very easily do.

To fry Sprats.

Rub off the scales with a rough towel, then nipping off their heads just below the gill covers, draw out the intestines, and after dredging them well with flour and drying them thoroughly in a cloth, fry them brown and crisp, and serve them up with melted butter, though many prefer them without any sauce whatever.

To fry Whitebait.

Dry them thoroughly, then dipping them in egg flour them well, and continue to dredge them well with flour all the time they are frying 'till it forms a complete coating over them. Take great care so to keep the whole community in motion that they do not adhere to each other or stick to the pan. Serve them up with a lemon cut in halves, and eat them with brown bread and butter.

To fry Salmon.

Cut your fish in slices of about a hand's thickness fry them of a pale brown, and serve them up with plain melted butter, which may be accompanied with anchovy or cornubian sauce ; added to which a few slices of cucumber will also form an agreeable addition.

Another Mode.

Take your slices of fish in the proportions above mentioned, and enveloping them in white paper, fry them 'till sufficiently done ; then serve them up in the paper, accompanied with caper sauce, though any other may be used if preferred.

To fry Salmon Peal, Trout, &c.

Salmon peal, and very large trout, if fried, should be split open by the back in the same manner as a mackerel,* and fried in the in the same manner, and should be served up with the same sauces.

To fry Small Trout.

Small trout, salmon peal, and parrs should

See Ante. p. 201.

be opened by the belly, and well coated with egg and bread crumb. When nicely fried they make an elegant dish. Garnish with fried parsley, and eat them with melted butter and anchovy, or any other sauce you prefer. Graylings and smelts may be dressed and served up in the same manner.

To fry John Dories.

A small dory, when properly fried, is a most delicious fish, and this is the mode in which, in our humble opinion the smaller fish of this kind should be prepared for the table. Take care that the fish be properly dried. They may be fried either with or without egg and bread crumb; but in the latter instance see that plenty of flour is thrown over them. Garnish with fried parsley and serve them up with plain melted butter, and with any sauce you like, as there is none we know of that is not adapted to them.

To fry Soles, Small Turbots, and Brills.

Soles, small turbot, and brills, should be fried whole. The dark side should be skinned off; the light skin being allowed to

remain. Cut off the fins close to the sides of the fish, scrape off the slime, and dry them well; then sprinkle them carefully on both sides with egg and bread crumb, and fry them of a fine pale brown, taking care to use an ample quantity of dripping. Garnish with fried parsley, and serve them up with melted butter, accompanied with anchovy or cornubian sauce, soy or ketchup.

Another mode of frying Soles, &c.

A delicious dish may be made either of soles, dabs, and indeed most other flat fish, by pursuing the following directions.—Scale your fish carefully, and, cutting them from the bone, bind them round with the skin outwards in a small fillet, with a little force-meat, made of bread crumbs, a small portion of parsley, and a few pickled or fresh oysters or shrimps chopped up small and placed between the folds; a little raw egg to bind the whole together; sprinkle the outer parts with egg and bread crumb; fry the whole in an abundant supply of dripping, and when done serve them up with a sauce prepared in the following manner,

Take all the bones and heads that you have cut from the flesh, which, place with

a small quantity of water, or a little veal broth, in a stew pan over a slow fire,—a little of the liquor of the oysters, if you have used any is a valuable addition.—Add a piece of butter of the size of a walnut, a glass of red wine, a squeeze or two of a lemon, a piece of lemon peel, a tea-spoon-ful of cornubian sauce, or half that quantity of mustard mixed up as a paste with soy and vinegar, one pickled mushroom, and three or four pickled onions. Season with nutmeg, cayenne pepper, common pepper, and salt, and throw in a small bundle of sweet herbs; keep the whole gently simmering, and thicken it to about the consistency of raw cream, throwing in a little flour from time to time, and keeping the whole in motion to prevent its curdling; allowing it to stew away 'till decreased to about one half the original quantity.

To fry Turbot Cutlets,

Cut off the fish from the bones, in cutlets of about a hand's breadth; take off any skin that may adhere to the dark side, but allow that on the pale side to remain. Sprinkle the cutlets well with egg and bread crumb, and fry them carefully in a plentiful supply of dripping. Turbot that has been already

dressed and allowed to get cold, is excellent when cooked in this way. Brills, and large plaice, flounders, john dory, and soles, either raw or dressed, may be cooked in the same manner. Garnish with fried parsley, and serve up with melted butter and anchovy, cornubian sauce, soy or ketchup.

Another mode.

Instead of egg and bread crumb, substitute batter; indeed the latter is rather better adapted to cutlets of fish that have been previously dressed; but when you use batter, you must take care to have plenty of dripping in your pan, otherwise the cutlets will be likely to burn and the batter to become tough.

To fry Plaice and Dabs.

These should be fried and served up in the same way as before directed respecting small turbot, brills, etc., except, that plaice and dabs are not skinned on either side. It is also a very common practice to cut them in two, or even three pieces, as, by this treatment, they are considered to eat crisper and less watery, than if dressed entire.

To fry Flounders.

Prepare your flounders as before directed,* and after covering them with egg and bread crumb, fry them of a fine pale brown, and serve them up with plain melted butter and anchovy sauce.

To fry Skate or Thornback.

This being cut in strips, as before directed,† should be well sprinkled with egg and bread crumb, and, when fried, should be served up garnished in the same manner, and eaten with the same sauces as fried turbot cutlets. To this you may add crab sauce, which is particularly adapted to fish of this kind.

To fry Salt Fish.

Small split cod and other salt fish of a small size, after being well watered to extract the salt, should be fried entire and served up with plain melted butter. Mustard mixed up with the butter, or cornubian sauce may be eaten with it.

To fry Salt Fish Cutlets.

Having well watered your fish, cut out your cutlets of about a hand's breadth, and

* See Ante. p. 160.

† See Ante. p. 161.

first dipping them in batter, fry them of a pale brown; garnish with fried parsley, and serve them up with plain melted butter, accompanied by a lemon cut in halves.

*To fry Cod's Sounds and Tongues,
or Oysters.*

Having prepared your sounds and tongues, as before directed,* dip them in batter, and fry and serve them up in the same manner as salt fish cutlets.† Oysters may be cooked in the same manner. It is, indeed, a good plan to dress and serve up the sounds and tongues as also the fried oysters with the cutlets, as the whole eat more agreeably together than either when served up separately. And now before closing this part of our subject, we must give some practical directions for preparing

Batter to fry Fish in.

Break a couple of eggs in a half-a-pint of milk, add to this six table-spoonsful of flour, and gradually mix the whole together. This should be done for three or four hours before the batter is required for use, and it must be beaten up again just before the cutlets are steeped in it.

* See Ante. p. 179.

† See last Receipt.

Muscles may be fried in batter in the same way as oysters, and when so cooked form an excellent dish.

To fry twice laid Cod, or any kind of previously dressed Fish.

Pull the fish completely to pieces with a fork, picking out the bones, and mix it up thoroughly with about equal portions of cold mashed potatoes; add to this three or four hard eggs chopped up fine, mixed with a small quantity of melted butter, just sufficient to bind the whole together, make them up in small flat cakes, of about an inch in thickness; fry them of a fine pale brown. Serve them up with plain melted butter, though some persons eat them without even this addition.

Another mode.

Take any previously dressed fish, and, carefully extracting all the bones, mince it up fine; season with a little nutmeg, cayenne, common pepper, and salt, and sufficient raw egg to bind the whole together; then make up a number of small balls and rub the out-

sides with egg and bread crumb. Fry them of a nice brown, and serve them up with a fish sauce like that before recommended for soles.* If this cannot be procured, serve them up with plain melted butter.

See Ante. p. 207.

SECTION III.

HOW TO BROIL FISH.

In broiling fish the principal points are, *first*, to have a clear fire, neither too fierce, nor so weak as to exhaust its force before the cookery is completed. *Secondly*, the gridiron must be kept clean: and *thirdly*, the fish must be thoroughly dried and prepared, otherwise it is scarcely possible that the work can be properly done. One thing that must be kept constantly in mind, is to prevent the fish from sticking to the bars, which, to say the least, will cause it to present a very unsightly appearance. This consequence may generally be prevented by well dusting the

fish with flour, and never placing it upon the gridiron 'till the latter is nearly red hot, the bars having previously been thoroughly scraped, and rubbed with either butter, lard, or suet. A little salt cast on a coal fire is an admirable thing for checking the smoke and causing it to burn clearly; but charcoal or cinders afford the best embers for the broiling process.

To broil large Cod, Ling, Hake, Haddocks, Pollacks, or Basse.

All these fishes should be cut up in portions in the same way as for frying,* only that egg and bread crumb must, in all cases, be omitted. Flour the pieces well, and set them on a gridiron over a clear fire, throwing over them a little pepper and salt while dressing; when done, rub in some butter before the fire, and serve up with plain melted butter. Mustard and vinegar, or cornubian sauce, will be a very proper accompaniment.

To broil small Cod, Mackerel, Whittings, &c.

These fishes should be dressed entire, being split by the back, and spread open,

See Ante. p. 192.

and being then well peppered inside ; afterwards throw a little flour over them to prevent their sticking to the bars, and when done serve them up, spread open the insides uppermost, with plain melted butter.

To broil Herrings.

These fishes should be prepared in the same manner as for frying,* and should be thoroughly dried and well floured, the roes should not be dressed in the fish ; but should be broiled with them, taking especial care to prevent their dropping between the bars. It is by no means a bad plan to fry the roes. Mustard mixed up with melted butter should be served up with these fish.

To broil Pilchards.

Pilchards should be placed on the gridiron without any previous preparation, and when done should be served up with a lemon cut in halves. The scaly covering may be taken off entire, which may be easily done with a knife, and cast aside. Some eat them with salt and water, and raw onion cut up in small pieces. We, ourselves, give a decided preference to plain melted butter.

See Ante. p. 203.

To broil Sprats.

Wipe off the scales with a cloth, then drawing out the intestines by the gills, run a small wood skewer through the eyes of a half-a-dozen or more and so broil them, sending them up on their backs whilst hot, which will cause them to eat more crisply than any means that has yet been discovered, and when so cooked, they form an excellent dish of fish, though by no means an expensive one.

To broil Eels.

Prepare your pieces in the same manner as for frying;* broil over a slow fire, and when done, serve up with plain melted butter. Some prefer parsley and butter, and those who object to the grossness of this fish should use the cornubian sauce.

To broil Salmon.

Cut your slices as for frying, season them with cayenne and common pepper, a little nutmeg, and some salt, then roll them in white paper well buttered, and broil them over a slow fire. Serve them up in the paper with the same sauces as fried salmon.†

* See Ante. p. 195.

† See Ante. p. 205.

To broil Red Mullet.

Open your mullets with a very sharp knife just below the throat, but scale them not, and carefully extract the intestines without disturbing or bruising the liver; then sew up the aperture, allowing the liver to remain in the fish, handling it as tenderly as possible, and then placing it in white paper well buttered, broil over a slow fire, and serve up in the paper with plain melted butter, in which the livers should be afterwards mixed up.

It requires great care to extract the intestines without injuring the liver, and sometimes spoiling it outright, so that where the preparation is left to unskilful hands, the safer plan is to dress the mullets without attempting to draw them.

Another very good plan when you draw your fish, is to preserve the livers and boil them separately in a small quantity of water; in fact, just as much as you would require for your melted butter, so that should the livers boil to pieces in the dressing process, you still retain all their valuable qualities.

To broil Breams and Shads to eat like Red Mullets.

Wipe your fish down with a coarse cloth from head to tail to cleanse off the slime,

taking care not to rub the contrary way, which might displace the scales, as their external armour ought to be preserved entire; then opening them take out all the inside but retain the gills. Then separate the liver from the garbage, and wiping out the body of the fish with a clean cloth, replace the liver, and sewing up the belly, wrap the fish in paper and broil it in the same manner as a red mullet, and serve it up with plain melted butter. A fish under a pound weight is best adapted for this purpose, and when so prepared, there are but few persons on whom it might not be passed as a genuine red mullet.

To broil Cod's Sounds and Tongues.

Prepare these as for boiling,* and after well peppering them with cayenne and common pepper, and a little salt, flour them well and broil them whole. Serve them up with melted butter accompanied with mustard.

SECTION IV.

HOW TO STEW FISH.

Stewing is a most useful mode of cooking fish, although one that is not so frequently employed as most others, arising, probably, from the erroneous idea that exists amongst many, that it is a difficult and tedious as well as an expensive process: occupying a considerable portion of time, and requiring a quantity of wine and many other costly ingredients. Such, however, is not strictly true; for, although, we are ready to admit

that a dish of this kind takes some time in the dressing, yet it is not requisite that so much of it should be devoted to the business as to tie up the hands of the cook from attending to other matters in the interim; and, notwithstanding, a small quantity of wine may be a nice addition, it is in no one case, that we are aware of, indispensable; whilst the expense of the other materials are very trifling in proportion to the real value of their services; as by this process of dressing many kinds that are almost valueless when cooked in any other manner,—carp for instance—form as good a dish of fish as the fastidious epicure would wish to see placed upon the table. It is true, indeed, we sometimes see a sad sloppy mess served up, which is *called* “stewed fish,” presenting altogether so uninviting appearance that one must be hungry indeed to venture upon it at all, and few would be desirous of partaking of it a second time; but depend upon it, in nine times out of ten, the fish has not undergone the necessary process, or very little care has been taken to carry it on properly.—How many persons are there who satisfied with sousing a fish into a quantity of water, accompanied with a few vegetables and boiling the whole to rags, serve it up broth

and all, as a dish of stewed fish; all the preliminary proceedings which are absolutely indispensable having been altogether omitted. No fish can be stewed brown without being first partially fried, and this over a good fire, whilst the stewing must be conducted over a very slow one, so that in the latter process at no time the liquid should quite attain to the boiling point. Most of the vegetables and other ingredients should also be submitted to some preliminary process, as we shall duly notice hereafter.

To stew Carp, Tench, Basse, and Mullet, brown.

Clean your fish thoroughly, and cut off all the fins; then flour it and fry it in plenty of butter, over a brisk fire 'till it is about three parts dressed. Then take it up, and placing it in a stew pan, add to it some meat gravy, and about an equal portion of water, a glass or two of red wine, a table-spoonful of soy or ketchup, and the same portion of cornubian sauce or lemon pickle, a few pickled mushrooms, a slice or two of lemon, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season with cayenne, pepper, a little nutmeg, and a blade or two of mace. Before placing your stew pan over the fire,

flour one or two onions and fry them in the same butter in which your fish was fried, turning them frequently to prevent their sticking to the pan; when they become brown, throw them butter and all into the stew pan, cover it over, and placing it on the fire, let it stew gently for about an hour, then take up the fish, and pour the gravy over it, and garnish with slices of lemon, and fried bread cut three corner ways.

Some persons kill their carps by cutting their throats, and saving all the blood throw it in to enrich the gravy.

If you suspect your fish to have imbibed a muddy flavour, you should sew up a piece of bread in its belly, which will absorb it: but for this very reason the bread itself must not be eaten.

A fish gravy, prepared as before directed,* will form a valuable addition to that you stew your fish in, if you have any at hand, or sufficient time and materials to prepare it.

Sea bream may be dressed in the same way as the other fish above mentioned.

To stew Conger.

Take about six pounds of the middle part of a large conger, and having ready a suffici-

See Ante. p. 195.

ent quantity of forcemeat, prepared according to the directions before laid down,* fill up the belly part with it, which being sewed up fry and stew your fish as before directed, and serve it up in the same manner.

To stew a Pike.

Stuff it with a forcemeat pudding as for boiling,† and fixing the tail in the mouth, dress and serve it up in the same way as a carp.

To stew Carp white.

Place your carp in a stew pan with a couple of quarts of water, half-a-pint of white wine, two onions, a stick of horse-radish, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season with a little cayenne, common pepper, and salt; let the whole stew away slowly for about an hour and a half. In the mean time, pour a couple of glasses of white wine into a small sauce pan, with two anchovies, an onion, a little lemon peel, a quarter of a pound of thick cream, and a large spoon-ful of the liquor in which the carp is stewing; add to this the yolks of two eggs well beaten up;

* See Ante. p. 184.

† See Ante. p. 148.

boil the whole together for a few minutes and, just before you take it off, squeeze a little lemon into it; then dish up your carp and pour the sauce over it. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Conger white.

Cut up your conger in steaks through the back bone, of about an inch in thickness; then boil one or two onions in the water or broth in which you stew your fish, (veal broth is the best) 'till the latter become quite soft; then put in your fish and let it stew gently 'till it be thoroughly dressed, then thicken the liquid in which your fish is stewing with a sufficient quantity of cream to make a rich gravy; season with a little cayenne and salt; keep the whole in motion that it may not curdle for two or three minutes, and just before taking it up add to it the squeeze of a lemon. Some persons substitute milk for cream; but this makes a very poor and meager gravy; still equal proportions of milk and cream are by no means amiss.

To stew Eels.

Having prepared your eels as for frying,* but without egg and bread crumb, flour them

See Ante. p. 195.

and fry them in butter 'till about three parts done, and stew them brown in the same manner as carp. Garnish with fried bread and sliced lemon.

To stew Lampreys.

Split open your lampreys, and extract the gristle that runs down the back; stew them brown, and serve them up in the same way as eels. They may be either dressed cut up in pieces, or split throughout and rolled round a skewer.

Another mode.

Having prepared your lampreys as above directed, put the pieces with a few slices of butter in a half-a-pint of gravy, half the quantity of white wine and cider, and the same of claret or port wine; an onion cut up in slices, a little lemon peel cut up fine, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season well with pepper, salt, cloves, nutmeg, a blade or two of mace, and a little cayenne; stew them over a slow fire, and when done, pour off the liquor into a saucepan, and boil it up with a couple of anchovies, a tea-spoonful of mustard and a squeeze of a lemon; thicken the gravy

with a little flour ; after the whole has boiled up for a few minutes, take the lampreys from the stew pan, and, placing them in a dish, pour the gravy over them. Garnish with fried bread and slices of lemon.

When lampreys can be procured alive, it is a good plan to bleed them and preserve the blood to mix with the gravy, and which is thrown into the stew pan, with the fish.

To stew Cod.

Cut your cod in slices as for frying, and fry them in butter 'till about half dressed ; then, taking up the pieces, place them in a stew pan with equal portions of wine and water, just in fact, sufficient to cover the fish ; season with nutmeg, pepper, and salt ; when the frying process is completed fry an onion in the butter that remains in the frying pan, and having prepared a fish gravy with the bones of the cod, as before directed,* pour this with the butter and onion into a saucepan, a piece of butter as big as an egg well rolled in flour, a pickled mushroom or two, half-a-score of oysters chopped up fine, and a squeeze of lemon. When the fish is done, add the liquor in which it was stewed, and,

See Ante. p. 105, 207.

letting the whole boil up together for a minute or two, strain it through a hair sieve, and placing the pieces of cod in a dish, pour the gravy over them.

If you wish to save the wine, substitute half-a-pint of good meat gravy; or if your fish gravy is made sufficiently rich, both wine and meat gravy may even be dispensed with. Cider also will answer the purpose nearly as well as white wine.

To stew Mackerel.

Open your fish by the back, and take out the bones. With these and the heads, and any other materials you have at hand make about half-a-pint of fish gravy, to this add the same proportion of meat gravy, a piece of butter coated in flour, an anchovy or a half a tea spoonful of anchovy sauce; twice that quantity of soy or ketchup, a squeeze of lemon, a little chopped fennel and parsley, and a pickled onion or two; season with cayenne, pepper, and salt; having all these ingredients prepared in your stew pan, cut the fish, if large, into quarters; if small, split it in two, then roll it round a skewer, and placing the pieces in a saucepan, add to it a glass of port wine, and let it boil for a minute or two, then strain it through a sieve and pour it over the fish.

To stew Soles, Small Turbots, and all kinds of Flat Fish.

Having skinned and prepared your soles as before directed,* fry them 'till half done; and then stew them in the same manner as carp,† with the simple addition of a couple of anchovies, or a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce.

Flounders, plaice, and dabs, may also be dressed in the same way, but all these should be skinned in the same manner as soles, and instead of being dressed entire, should be cut up in two or three pieces,

Turbots should be skinned on the dark side only, nor would even this be necessary were it not that the hard tubercles interspersed over that part, are troublesome when eating the fish, and for this reason, the brill which has none of these may be dressed with its entire skin on.

Serve up with the gravy poured over the fish, and garnish with sliced lemon only.

Another mode.

The large sized soles are best stewed when cut off the bones, and either rolled round in fillets or cut up in cutlets; the bones and

* See Ante, p. 186.

† See Ante, p. 222.

heads being boiled up will assist in making the gravy; in other respects it should be stewed and served up in the same way as when the fish is dressed whole.

Large turbot, when stewed, should be cut up in cutlets.

To stew Sturgeon.

Sturgeon should be cut up in slices of about an inch or a little more in thickness, which being half fried should be placed in a stew pan with some good veal broth, an onion, and a bundle of sweet herbs. It should be allowed to stew 'till perfectly tender.

Having fried an onion or two in the butter in which the fish was fried, pour this, and also the gravy in which the fish was stewed, into a saucepan, adding to it a glass or two of wine, some butter rolled in flour, or about the same weight of cream, and a spoonful of ketchup; as soon as the whole has boiled well up together, strain it through a sieve, and pour it over the fish. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Salt Ling.

This is a most splendid dish, added to which it is an exceedingly useful one, as you

may have salt ling at hand and ready for use at times and places where no other kind of fish can be procured for love or money.— And now for the receipt.

Having thoroughly steeped your fish so as to extract the salt, etc., as before directed,* take a piece of the proportion you require, and boil it 'till it is just sufficiently done to enable you to pull it in pieces with a fork, then take it up and pull out all the bones. The quantity of sauce will, of course, depend on the proportion of fish necessary for your table; but for a moderate sized piece of ling, four onions, four eggs, and a pint of new milk and half that quantity of cream is sufficient.— Some use nothing but cream, but this makes rather too rich a gravy.—The onions must be boiled before the sauce is made; and the eggs must be boiled hard and cut up into slices. Then take some butter rolled in flour, and some mustard, or what is still better, a tea-spoonful of cornubian sauce, and mix it with the onions, eggs, etc.; and let all these boil up gently with the fish for about half-an-hour.

Serve the whole up together, and garnish with sliced egg boiled hard, and sliced lemon; the egg being placed on top of the fish, and the lemon around the edges of the dish.

To stew Cod's Sounds and Tongues,

Having prepared them as before directed,* boil them 'till about half done. Then having ready some veal broth, put into it two boiled onions, a small piece of butter rolled in flour, and enough cream to thicken the gravy, and a piece of lemon peel; then put in your sounds and tongues, and let them stew gently for about twenty minutes; season with a little nutmeg, cayenne pepper, and salt. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Pilchards and Potatoes,

Wash some salt pilchards, and place them with some peeled potatoes in a saucepan, with a sufficient quantity of water to prevent the stew from burning; let the whole boil 'till the potatoes are done, and then serve them up fish and potatoes in the same dish.

Water Souchy.

This may be made of most kinds of fishes, but perch, tench, and flounders are those usually engaged in the service. The principal thing to be kept in view in preparing this mess, is to extract every particle of good-

See Ante. p. 179.

ness from one set of fish, to make a rich soup to dress their fellows in. To accomplish this, therefore, you must take about one half the fish, and boiling them to a mash in about two quarts of water, and some broken parsley and parsley roots, 'till the greater portion of the muscle of the fish may be strained with the gravy, through a course sieve or cullender; which being done, add a little parsley chopped fine, and then put in the remainder of your fish; season with pepper and salt; let your fish stew 'till thoroughly done, and then throw them with their soup into a tureen.

If you have large and small fish, you should use the former in the soup, and reserve the latter for serving up whole. It is not necessary that all the fish should be of the same kind. Tench and perch may be served up together and a small eel or two, or a little conger will do admirably for the soup affair.

Another way.

Scale, gut, and wash your fish, put salt in the water you intend to dress it in, then separating an onion into round rings, throw these in with a handful of clean parsley; then add as much milk as will turn the water white; and boil the fish in this 'till they are

done enough. Serve them up in a tureen with the soup, parsley, and onions.

A third way.

Skin your fish, and place it in a stew pan, in a gravy made as follows. Melt a little butter in the stew pan, then throw in a little boiling water, some sliced onions, a few slices of carrot or turnip, some parsley roots, a little cornubian sauce, soy, or ketchup; season with pepper, and a little allspice, and when the fish is nearly done, give a slight squeeze of lemon into the gravy; then give it a shake up, and serve it up gravy and all in a deep dish.

SECTION V.



HOW TO CURRY FISH.



It may be laid down as a general rule that admits of no exception, that every kind of fish that may be stewed may also be converted into a curry, added to which, fish already dressed may also be pressed into the service, and all kinds may be mixed together, which, so far from being detrimental, is often an improvement to the whole.

The foundation of all fish curries should be a rich fish gravy, made with the bones

and some portion of the flesh of some kind of fish or other* ; small congers are admirably adapted for this purpose, and are fit for little else. To this should be added a few onions fried in butter and thrown with it into the gravy ; add to this a desert table-spoonful of curry powder, and a piece of butter rolled in flour.

Having half-fried your fish as for stewing,† place it in a stew pan and let the whole stew slowly over the fire the time you would allow when stewing in the ordinary way. Then having your rice prepared, either serve up your curry in the same or a separate dish.

Some attention is requisite in boiling the rice, for if this be badly done, the curry is spoiled. The best and most simple plan is to boil the rice gently 'till it be sufficiently done, and then, throwing off the water, to place the saucepan either on a stove, or on the fire 'till the grains separate ; some prefer placing the saucepan, for a short time in an oven.

* See Ante. p. 195.

† See Ante. p. 222.

SECTION VI.

HOW TO ROAST AND BAKE FISH.

Fish both for roasting and baking, are prepared in much the same manner; and therefore we may fairly treat on both subjects in the same section.

To bake a Cod's Head.

Fill a baking dish with about a quart of water; add to this an onion stuck with cloves, a piece of lemon peel and a little grated horse-radish, a large spoonful of pepper, and a blade or two of mace, and some grated nutmeg.

Plunge your fish into this, flouring well all that remains above water, sticking also pieces of butter about the size of oysters all over it, and place it in an oven 'till sufficiently baked. After taking up the fish, place it carefully on a clean dish, and pour out all the liquor from the baking dish into a saucepan, adding to it a glass of wine, or something less than half that quantity of vinegar, a few oysters either fresh or pickled chopped up in small pieces, a tea-spoonful of ketchup or soy, and a good sized piece of butter rolled in flour. The whole must be stirred well together 'till it boils, and must then be thrown into the dish with the fish. Garnish with fried bread and sliced lemon.

To bake a Pike.

Having well scaled and cleaned the pike, cut off its fins and stuffed its belly with a forcemeat pudding, prepared as before directed,* place the tail in its mouth, in the same manner as for stewing,† then place it on its belly in a baking dish, flour it well all over, and stick it well with pieces of butter. Then place it in a baking oven; or a dutch oven before the fire, basting it occasionally

* See Ante. p. 184.

† See Ante. p. 225.

with the dripping that comes from it. When done take out the pike and place it on a clean dish: and after adding a squeeze of a lemon, a little soy, or ketchup, and a little melted butter; stir up the whole well together and pour it into a dish with the fish. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To bake Hake, Ling, Basse, Bream, &c.

Any of these fish may be dressed in the same way as the pike; but with the exception of the hake and ling, the rest must be content to lie on their sides, being of too bulky a make to permit their tails being fixed in their mouths.

A portion of conger, with a forcemeat pudding in the way before recommended for stewing, may be cooked in the same way.

To bake Fish in Fillets.

Take a moderate sized mullet, basse, codling, haddock, or, in fact, any fish you like; cut off the head, and after skinning, splitting, and boning them, roll them up in fillets; flour them and stick them with butter, and bake them either in the oven, or what is still

better, in a dutch oven before the fire. Mix a little thin melted butter with the gravy that comes from the fish and pour over it. Some prefer lobster sauce which is certainly an agreeable accompaniment to this dish.

Another way.

Having skinned and boned your fish as before directed, coat it well on both sides with egg and bread crumb mixed with a little parsley shred very fine; then having some oysters bearded and chopped up fine, place these between the rolls, and bind up your fish in fillets, seasoning them with a little cayenne, nutmeg, and a tolerable quantity of pepper and salt, and bake them as in the former receipt. This should be served up and eaten with oyster sauce. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To bake Hake on Potatoes.

Take a large baking dish, rub the bottom well with fat bacon, and then dredge it with flour; next peel a sufficient quantity of potatoes to cover the bottom of the dish, after which take the body of a hake, the head being taken off and the back bone taken out

in the manner we have before pointed out,* and having peppered and salted the inside, spread the fish on the potatoes with the back uppermost, flour that well, and then stick over it a few pieces of fat bacon. Send this to the oven, and when done, serve up the whole hot in the dish in which it was baked.

This is an admirable dish for the poorer classes, as for less than a shilling, an admirable meal may be furnished to at least a dozen people. Basse, conger, wrasse, cod, pollack, and ling, may be cooked to advantage in the same way.

To bake Carp.

Lay your fish in a baking dish, and pour in a sufficient quantity of wine, (whether red or white is immaterial,) to cover the fish; season with cloves, nutmeg, mace, cayenne, pepper, and salt; add to this a bundle of sweet herbs, and an anchovy, or a small quantity of anchovy sauce, and bake the whole for about an hour in an oven. Then pouring off the liquor into a saucepan, add to it some butter rolled in flour, a squeeze of lemon, and boil it all up together, keeping it stirring all the time, then placing the fish

* See Ante. p. 158.

in a clean dish, pour the sauce over it. A grey mullet is exceedingly good when dressed in the same way.

If you are desirous of saving a portion of your wine, you may use equal quantities of wine and water, or substitute the place of the former by a prepared fish gravy, according to the directions before laid down.*

To bake Salmon.

First scale your fish, then taking out the back bone, chop up some shrimps and oysters, and mixing these with crumbs of bread and a little parsley chopped up very fine, and seasoning with a little cayenne, pepper, and salt, roll the whole up tight; and after flouring it, stick it about with butter, and putting it into a dish bake it in a quick oven. Mix the gravy that comes from the fish with a little butter, rolled in flour, and placing the fish in a clean dish, pour the gravy over it. Garnish with fried parsley.

Another mode.

Take a piece, either of the middle or tail, flour it well, and, binding it round with a piece of tape, hang it to a bottle jack, or fix

* See Ante. p. 195, 207.

it in a cradle spit, or in a dutch oven, and let it roast before a good fire, basting it from time to time with butter.

Eels and Lampreys.

Skin your eels or lampreys, and cut off their heads, and also their tails just below the vent; the heads should be thrown away, but the latter should be preserved and dressed with the other parts. Fill the belly with a forcemeat pudding and sew it up, then flour your fish and stick it well about with butter, pour a little water into your dish and bake it in a moderate oven. When done pour off the gravy, and, after skimming off the fat, strain it through a sieve; add to it a tea-spoonful of lemon pickle, twice that quantity of ketchup, an anchovy, and a slice of lemon; let it boil ten minutes, thicken it with butter and flour, and serve it up in the same dish with your fish. Garnish with shred lemon and fried parsley.

Congers may be dressed in precisely the same manner, only that a middle piece of a large one is preferable to an entire fish of a smaller size.

To dress Red Herrings.

Having steeped them either in boiling water or beer, pursuant to the directions before laid down,* toast them on a fork before the fire, 'till they are sufficiently done, and be sure that the roe is sufficiently dressed through; then rub as much butter over them as they will absorb before the fire. If any of them contain hard roes, then open them tenderly by the belly, and insert some butter between the lobes of the roe, closing it up again so that the heat within may the more readily melt the butter. Mustard is an agreeable accompaniment to red herrings, though it is one that a very small portion of the world are aware of.

Salt Pilchards may be prepared and cooked in the same manner, of course, not omitting the mustard.

To roast Eels according to the Waltonian system.

The worthy old angler, Izaak Walton, gives the following receipt for roasting an eel, which we now offer to our readers in his own words. "First, wash him in water and salt, then pull off his skin below his vent or

* See Ante. p. 164.

navel; having done that, take out his guts as clean as you can, but wash him not; then give him three or four scotches with a knife, and then put into his belly and into those scotches, sweet herbs, an anchovy, and a little nutmeg grated or cut very small, and mixed with good butter and salt; having done this, then pull his skin over him, all but his head, which you are to cut off, to the end you may tie his skin to the part where his head grew, and it must be so tied as to keep all his moisture within his skin; and having done this, tie him with tape or pack-thread to a spit and roast him leisurely, and baste him with water and salt 'till his skin breaks, and then with butter; and having roasted him enough, let what was put into his belly, and what he drips be his sauce."

To roast a Sturgeon.

Sturgeon is considerably improved by previously laying in salt and water for six or eight hours, into which it should be plunged with all his scales on; then cleansing and scraping it thoroughly, fix it on a spit, and baste it well with butter whilst roasting, dredging it occasionally with flour, and when half done, have prepared some fine grated

bread, with a few sweet herbs, and a little parsley chopped up fine as possible, which should be cast over it, and which, by the aid of the butter and flour, will adhere to the fish ; when sufficiently done, serve it up in a dish, and pour upon it the following sauce, which must be prepared to the very letter according to the directions laid down by Mr. Glasse, viz: a pint of water, an anchovy, a small bit of lemon peel, an onion, a bundle of sweet herbs, mace, cloves, whole pepper, black and white, a piece of horse-radish ; cover it close, let it boil a quarter of an hour, then after straining it, return it again to the saucepan, pour in a pint of white wine, about a dozen of oysters and their liquor, two spoonsful of ketchup, two of walnut pickle, the inside of a crab bruised fine, lobster or shrimps,—we with humble deference prefer the two latter,—a piece of butter rolled in flour, a spoonful of mushroom pickle, or juice of lemon ; let all simmer together, and when your fish is dished, pour the sauce over it. Garnish with fried bread and sliced lemon.

Another mode.

Another way is to take a piece of sturgeon of the proportionate size you require, and

after plunging it in water and salt, as before directed, and washing it clean, to parboil it, and then stripping off the skin to roast it in precisely the same way as before directed, and serve it up with the same sauce.

To roast Salmon.

This fish may be roasted either entire or in pieces, and either in a dutch oven or a cradle spit, or it may be tied with splints to a common spit; it should be thoroughly scaled, and should be basted with butter whilst roasting, being occasionally dredged with flour. It is sometimes skinned, and coated with egg and bread crumb, but in our opinion the former is the preferable mode, as it preserves the moisture, whilst in the latter instance it eats too dry to please most palates. Add a little melted butter and a glass or two of wine to the gravy that drips from the fish, and just warming this up 'till it boils, throw it into the dish with the fish.

SECTION VII.

FISH PIES AND PATTIES.

Fish pies are a valuable addition to a bill of fare; and by this mode a great variety of fishes may be employed to great advantage. In Cornwall indeed, so great is the predilection of the natives near the sea shore to pies of this kind, that there are few fish that are found on their coasts that are not applied to this purpose.

Eel pies.

Prepare your eels as for frying or boiling,* and cut them up in the same manner; season

*See Ante. p. 183.

them with pepper and salt, pour in sufficient water nearly to fill the dish, and placing on a lid of crust, bake them 'till they are thoroughly done in an oven. Then take off the lid and pour in some cream, proportioned to the size of your pie, and instantly replacing the crust, the cream mixing with the gravy will make a most delicious sauce ; some use butter, but this is ill adapted to the purpose, as it makes a sad oily affair, as will also the cream if put in before the pie is baked.

Conger pie.

This is prepared in much the same manner, but, as more water will exude from a conger than an eel during the process of baking, if you find the pie too full of liquor, you should pour off some portion of it before pouring in the cream. None of the tail parts of a conger should ever be put into the pie, those portions being full of forked bones, which prove exceedingly disagreeable.

If the conger is very large then it should be cut up in steaks as for frying.

Hake pie.

This should be cut in cutlets as for frying,* and being laid in a pie dish and seasoned

* See Ante. p. 194.

with a little cayenne, pepper and salt, should be baked in the same manner as an eel pie, and with the addition of cream to enrich the gravy. If you are unable to procure cream, or wish to save it, then prepare a good fish gravy of the hake's bones, as before directed,* and pour into the pie instead of cream.

Basse pie.

Basse make an excellent pie; such being the mode in which they are usually cooked in Cornwall. They are prepared in much the same way as hake, with this difference only, that they are cut in steaks through the back bone in the same way as eels or conger, instead of being divided up in cutlets like hake. Large tub fish may be prepared in the same manner as basse.

Sea Bream and Wrasse pie.

These fish are generally put whole and entire into the pie dish, being first well scaled and the fins carefully cut off; the latter are, however, exceedingly watery, and when the pie is baked, the lid being raised, the whole of the liquid should be strained off and a good supply of cream substituted in its place.

* See Ante. p. 195.

Salmon pie.

Cut your salmon in cutlets, in the same manner as a hake is done,* lay the cutlets in the pie dish, the bottom of which must be well rubbed with butter; pepper and salt your cutlets well, and if you can procure them, throw in some bruised shrimps between them, or break up some portions of a lobster; fill up the pie about half full with water: and with the salmon bones, and any other proper ingredients you can command, make a good fish gravy, and when the pie is thoroughly baked open the lid and pour the gravy into it.

Flat Fish pie.

The sole, of all flat fish, on account of its exceeding firmness, makes the best pie, though every species of flat fish may be cooked in that manner. To make a sole pie, the largest fish of the kind you can procure are to be preferred. You must carefully cut the flesh in cutlets from the bone, and these you must place in layers in your pie dish and season each with a little cayenne, plenty of pepper, a little nutmeg and ground mace,

* See Ante. p. 194.

and between each layer place some oysters, the latter being previously bearded, or a few bruised shrimps; boil up the bones of the soles with the liquor and beards of the oysters in a little broth, sufficient altogether nearly to fill up the pie dish, which it must be poured into, and being covered with a crust, must be thoroughly baked, and when done, the lid must be lifted up and a quantity of cream, proportioned to the size of the pie, poured into it. Some substitute new milk thickened with flour.

Any other kind of flat fish, as we before remarked, may be dressed in the same way.

Pilchard pie.

Carefully scale and gut your pilchards, which cannot be too fresh, and having scalded some leeks, place them in about equal proportions with your pilchards in your pie dish, with sufficient water nearly to fill the dish, and when baked enough, open the lid and pour in some cream or new milk. Some persons, indeed, make pies of this kind with salted pilchards, but these are so exceedingly rank and strong, as to suit but few palates. If you do use salt pilchards, you should first of all wash them thoroughly in fresh water,

and then pouring a sufficient quantity of boiling beer over them to cover them, allow them to remain in the liquor 'till it becomes cold, and then place your pilchards with the leeks and pursue the same mode as already directed.

Salt Fish pie.

Prepare your salt fish as for stewing,* and when it will bear it, pull it in pieces with a fork, and having four or five hard boiled eggs chopped up fine, season with cayenne, common pepper, and salt, mix the whole together, then fill up your dish with as much milk as the dish will contain; when the pie is baked, lift the lid, and if it appears too dry, pour in a little new milk. Some add mashed potatoes to the eggs and fish, which we, ourselves, consider to be an improvement. Be very careful that your fish be thoroughly soaked, so that the salt may be extracted, otherwise your labour will be all in vain, and your pie unfit to be eaten.

Pies and patties of shell fish will be treated of in the next section.

* See Ante. p. 231.

SECTION VIII.

HOW TO DRESS SHELL FISH.

The preliminary process of boiling most kinds of shell fish having been already treated on,* any further observations upon that head will, of course, be unnecessary here; we shall, therefore, confine ourselves to those modes of dressing shell fish we have not previously commented upon.

To stew Lobsters.

Take a large lobster, or two small ones, and extracting out all the meat from the head,

* See Ante. p. 187, 188.

body, tail, and claws, break it all up into small portions; put the whole into about half a pint of strong fish or meat gravy; thicken it with a piece of butter rolled in flour, or a proportionate quantity of cream, half a glass of white wine, or a table-spoonful of vinegar, an anchovy, or a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce, double that quantity of cornubian sauce, soy or ketchup; add a squeeze of a lemon; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, nutmeg, and some pounded mace; let the whole warm gently over a slow fire 'till it begins to simmer, then serve it up in a silver dish if you have one. Garnish with sliced lemon and bread sippets.

To stew Lobsters in the Irish way.

Cut and break a boiled lobster, but not into small pieces; prepare a mixture of mustard, vinegar, and a pretty good quantity of cayenne, put this with the lobster, and a good sized piece of butter well floured into a stew pan; keep the cover close, and let it boil for about five minutes, when you must throw in a glass of sherry or madeira, and let it boil up for about five minutes more; then serve it up, and garnish with sliced lemon.

In Ireland this savoury mess is often prepared in the same apartment in which it is eaten, being cooked in a machine called a *dispatcher*, which has a spirit lamp under it, and is dressed in the presence of the company, whose appetites are much excited by the remarkable smell and agreeable odour it emits whilst the cooking process is progressing.

Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh in his Irish Sketch Book, speaks in the highest terms of this dish; he also proceeds to inform us that "porter is commonly drank with it, and whisky punch afterwards."

Lobster pie.

Prepare your lobsters as directed in the last receipt, and, if your lobster be a female, beat up the coral and the spawn in a mortar. This being done, cast all you have picked out, both great and small together, in a stew pan, with a small quantity of water or veal broth, three tea-spoonsful of vinegar, and a good sized piece of butter rubbed in flour; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, a small quantity of nutmeg and pounded mace. Let all these ingredients warm very gently over a slow fire 'till the mixture begins to simmer;

then put the whole into a very shallow pie dish, cover it with a thick rich crust, and as soon as the paste is done, it will be ready for the table.

Lobster patties.

Prepare your lobsters as above, only bruise the tail part into smaller portions. If you intend to have small patties, bake up some fine puff paste in patty-pans, the bottoms of which you must well butter, otherwise the patties will stick to them; fill up the space between the pastry the lobster is eventually to occupy, with a small piece of bread, in order to preserve a sufficient hollow space whilst they are baking; then commit your patties to the oven, and whilst they are baking, warm up your lobster with the necessary ingredients in a stew pan, taking care that it never quite reaches to the boiling point, and when the patties are sufficiently baked, lift up the lid of each, and carefully extracting the bread, pour in the lobster and a proportionate quantity of the liquid in which it has stewed in the hollow space the bread previously occupied.

If a large covered patty is required, then, of course, the bread inserted must be propor-

tioned to it, although it is a very common practice, to leave it open, so that the lid in such case may be dispensed with; but still the bread should be inserted to preserve the space for the lobster to occupy.

Lobster in brown sauce.

The lobster being minced up fine, should be stewed in a pint of strong beef soup, with butter coated in flour, a glass of wine, a teaspoonful of anchovy, another of soy or ketchup, and a squeeze of lemon; season with cayenne pepper, salt, and a little beaten mace; let the whole stew very slowly and simmer for about five minutes. Serve it up hot in a covered silver dish, or in a vegetable dish that has a cover, in order that it may be preserved hot.

Lobster balls.

Take the meat of a lobster together with the coral and spawn, and pound it together in a mortar, adding to it bread crumbs, about one quarter the proportion of the lobster; season well with cayenne, pepper, bruised mace, and salt; mix a little melted butter with the

ingredients, and making them up into balls, rub them well with egg and bread crumb, and fry them of a fine pale brown.

To curry Lobster.

Stew your lobster as before directed, and when it simmers, add to it a tea-spoonful of cornubian sauce, and about double that quantity of curry powder; let the whole simmer gently, stirring it well for about a couple of minutes, then throw it out upon a dish, covered with rice, cooked according to the directions before laid down.* If you have no cornubian sauce, then boil down an onion to a pulp in the broth you intend to stew your lobster in, first straining the liquid, or at any rate, taking out the onion.

Lobster scollopped.

Having extracted the lobster from the shell, break it into very small pieces, mixing the spawn, if any, up with it; place it in a stew pan; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, and bruised mace; mix the whole together with some bread crumbs, and place the whole in scollop shells; then break up the

* See Ante. p. 258.

shells and claws of the lobster, and place it in a small quantity of water, and let the whole stew 'till reduced to about half its original bulk, then strain off the liquor and place it in a stew pan, and thicken it with a piece of floured butter; pour this over the lobster just sufficient to moisten the whole; then sprinkle bread crumbs over the top, and bake the scollops in a dutch oven before the fire, and when done, brown the bread crumbs with a salamander, and serve them up in the scollop shells.

Lobster salad.

The lobster being boiled, the whole of the flesh should be extracted from the shell, the tail part being cut or broken in tolerably large portions, and the whole with the cream, coral, and spawn, if any, well mixed up together and put into the bottom of the bowl; the salad and salad mixture being thrown over it.

To stew Prawns and Cray Fish.

These must be previously boiled according to the directions before laid down,* and when cold, the shells and also the heads, which

* See Ante. p. 188.

should be slightly bruised, must be boiled in a small quantity of water or veal broth, with a blade or two of mace, and a few whole peppercorns, 'till all the strength is extracted from them; then, straining off the liquor, throw it into a stew pan with a glass of white wine, or double that quantity of vinegar, a good sized piece of butter rolled in flour, or a trifle more than the weight of the butter of cream; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, a little nutmeg, and some pounded mace; then put in the prawns tails, and let the whole simmer gently for a minute or two, but be careful it does not boil up strongly; then pour the whole into a dish and send them up hot.

A portion of lobster, cray fish, or crab, may be mixed up with the prawns if required.

To curry Prawns.

Boil an onion in a small quantity of water, 'till it is reduced to a pulp, in this, stew your heads and shells of prawns as above, and having strained off the liquor, then throw it with the prawns into the stew pan, and let them warm gradually 'till they simmer, and then throw in a spoonful or more of curry

powder, proportionate to the quantity of your prawns, stirring the whole well together, serve them up on boiled rice.

Shrimp and Prawn patties.

Prepare your patties as before directed, and having stewed your shrimps and prawns in the way just before pointed out,* (omitting, of course the stewed onion,) pour them with their sauce into the patties; serve them up folded in a napkin to keep them hot. They may, however, be eaten cold, and form an excellent dish for a supper.

To dress a Crab cold.

Take a boiled crab, and opening the shell and breaking off the claws extract the meat, carefully picking out every particle of shell; mix the whole well together with a good quantity of mustard and vinegar, and season well with pepper, salt, and a little cayenne. Then thoroughly cleansing the back shell, fill it with the meat, which should be eaten cold without any further dressing.

To dress a Crab hot.

Mix your meat as above, but add to it about one fourth the proportion of bread

* See Ante. p. 260, 261.

crumbs with several pieces of butter placed here and there about the size of an oyster, season in the same manner as before directed, only adding a little bruised mace, put the meat in the crab shell or in scollops, with a covering of bread crumbs, and a few pieces of butter on the top; bake the shell before the fire or in an oven, and when done, brown over the top with a salamander, and serve it up either in the shell or scollops.

Crab may also be stewed and made into a curry in the same manner as a lobster, and when so prepared forms a dish but little, if at all, inferior to it.

Oyster patties.

Having bearded your oysters, boil up the beards and hard parts in the liquor 'till all their strength and goodness is extracted, and the bulk of liquid considerably reduced, then strain the liquor through a sieve, and having cut up the remaining portion of your oysters into small pieces, throw them together with the strained liquor into a stew pan; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, nutmeg, and a very little grated lemon peel. Let the whole warm gradually 'till it begins to simmer, then throw in sufficient cream to thicken it,

and keep turning the mixture 'till it simmers again, and then pour the contents into your patties. Be not too sparing of your cream : depend upon it milk and flour will never answer the purpose, whatever strict economists may say to the contrary.

Another mode.

A most delicious patty is also made by mixing chopped portions of veal sweetbread with oysters, in about equal quantities, which affords one of the most delicious dishes that can be brought to table.

Oyster sausages.

These are prepared by chopping up veal very fine, then pounding it in a mortar, and chopping up an equal proportion of oysters very small, all of which are mixed up with bread crumbs and a little beef suet, and moistened with some of the liquor taken from the oysters ; the whole being bound together by means of an egg beaten up, and being previously seasoned with pepper and salt, and a little beaten mace, it is moulded into the form of sausages, or flat cakes, and fried in butter.

Scollopped Oysters.

Place a layer of bread crumbs in your scollop shells, the bottoms of which should be well rubbed with butter; then having bearded your oysters, place them in layers upon the bread crumbs; season them well with pepper and salt, and place a number of small pieces of butter between the layers; then place another layer of bread crumbs, butter, and oysters, 'till the shell is full, and then covering the whole with bread crumb, and a few pieces of butter on the top; bake them before the fire or in an oven, and when done brown them over the top with a salamander, and serve them up in the shells.

Prawns and shrimps may be scollopped in the same manner, as may also muscles, cockles, and every other kind of edible shell fish.

The subject of potting lobsters and prawns, as also pickling oysters and other shell fish, will be treated of, under the heads of potting and pickling.

To stew Muscles and Cockles.

Having placed them in a stew pan over the fire, 'till the shells become open, throw them into a cullender over a deep dish, so

that you may preserve the liquor that comes from them ; then take out the muscles from the shells, and throw as much of the liquor as you require into a small stew pan, add to it a good sized piece of butter, and a proportionate quantity of vinegar to give it an agreeable flavour ; season with salt, plenty of pepper, and a little cayenne ; warm it gently over a slow fire, keeping it stirring all the time, and when it simmers throw in the muscles ; let them remain about a minute, then throw them into a deep dish and serve them up hot.

In preparing your muscles be careful to eradicate the fibrous beards by which they adhere to the rocks, which, if eaten, will be attended with most unpleasant, if not dangerous consequences : still, from its wiry texture grating between your teeth, it can easily be detected when you eat the muscle. It is from inadvertently swallowing these beards that muscles are by some, considered to be of a poisonous nature, and the deliterious effects are said to be produced by a small crab that is found in the shell but this little creature is quite innocuous and may be eaten with impunity, without producing any ill effect whatever upon those who choose to venture upon so untempting a morsel.

SECTION IX.

SAUCES FOR FISH.

Lobster Sauce.

Extract the meat of the lobster from the shell and claws, and break it up into small pieces ; if you have a hen lobster, take out all the coral and spawn and pound it up fine in a mortar : boil up the shells, which should be broken up, in half-a-pint of water or veal broth, with a little ground allspice, or broken mace, and whole pepper, and a small portion of horse-radish scraped into it ; let this boil

until all the strength of the ingredients is thoroughly extracted; then strain off the liquor, and throw it with the lobster into a stew pan; adding to it half-a-pound of cream, or, if that cannot be procured, the same quantity of thick melted butter, a tea-spoonful or two of anchovy sauce, and a squeeze of lemon. Stir the materials about, and let the whole gently simmer for about five minutes; but above all things be careful not to let it boil; season with cayenne and salt only whilst the stewing process is going on, and serve it up in sauce boats.

Shrimp Sauce.

Prepare your shrimps as for stewing,* only add a little more liquor, which must be thickened with melted butter or cream; whilst stewing in the pan, add a tea-spoonful or more of anchovy sauce, in proportion to the quantity of your shrimps, and season with cayenne and a little bruised mace, or allspice, and salt. Serve it up in boats in the same way as for lobster.

Crab Sauce.

Pick out a sufficient quantity of the meat of a crab and mix it well up with an equal

*See Ante. p. 261.

proportion of its cream; then having some thin melted butter, in a stew pan, throw the crab into it, with a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce, or an anchovy, thicken with cream or butter coated in flour; and season with cayenne, allspice, and salt. Serve it up in boats.

Oyster Sauce.

In opening your oysters take care to preserve their liquor; then having bearded and taken off the tough parts of the oysters, stew these with the beards in the liquor, to which, add some broth, if you have any, and if not, as much water as you will require, in proportion to the quantity of the sauce you intend to make; at the same time allowing a sufficient quantity for it to diminish to about one half the original bulk before you put in the oysters; then strain it off, and throw it with your oysters into a saucepan with either an anchovy, or a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce, and a good sized piece of butter rolled in flour, sufficient to thicken the whole; keep it turning round to prevent the butter from curdling, and take care to have butter enough, as in nine times out of ten sufficient butter

is not allowed, and a sad wishy-washy affair is the inevitable consequence, as all diners out must almost daily experience.

Cockle Sauce.

Mix up a good sized piece of butter in plenty of flour, and melt it up with some of the liquor of the cockles; a spoonful of anchovy, or one of those little fishes dissolved in the manner we shall shortly hereafter point out,* and a little vinegar; then throw in the cockles, and shake them about for two or three minutes, and serve them up in boats.

Muscle Sauce.

This is prepared in precisely the same way as the last, only that it is better to substitute white wine instead of the vinegar.

To prepare Anchovies for Sauce.

Take as many as you require out of the pickle; dip them in hot water; then laying them flat on their sides, scrape off the scales and white slime, and, with a knife, remove

* See next Receipt but one below.

what portion of the intestines you may find, for small as it is, it had always better be put out of the way. Then fill a water plate with boiling water, and, laying your anchovies upon it, take out the back bones, and mix up the meat (which will speedily melt with the heat of the plate into a kind of paste) with a little butter and flour. This may afterwards be thrown into and mixed up with melted butter. If you wish for a nice anchovy paste for a sandwich, or toast, then mix up your anchovy with the butter only.

Another mode.

To two anchovies prepared as above, add one glass of white wine and water, half a nutmeg grated and a little lemon peel ; when it has boiled five or six minutes, strain it off and add to it a spoonful of white wine vinegar, then prepare some rich melted butter and cast the mixture into it, stirring it well together for about a minute, and serve it up either in boats or pour it over the fish.

Horse-Radish Sauce.

Stew an onion to a pulp in good fish or meat gravy ; into this grate a tea-spoonful of horse-radish ; add to this a couple of ancho-

vies, or two tea-spoonsful of that sauce, and the same quantity of mustard. Let the whole simmer gently over the fire, keeping it stirring all the time, and thicken it either with cream, or butter rolled in flour, and just before you take it up give a slight squeeze of lemon.

Caper Sauce.

Chop up your capers fine, and throw them into melted butter. Serve them up in boats. It is a sauce well adapted for salmon, mackerel, pilchards, eels, and other rich fish; though more frequently called into the service by our continental neighbours than ourselves.

Parsley and Butter.

Having chopped your parsley fine, boil it up with the water or broth in which you melt your butter, and by the time the latter is melted the parsley will be sufficiently done.

Fennel Sauce.

Boil the fennel in the same water in

which you boil your fish, and when it becomes tender take it up, and chopping it up fine, mix it with plain melted butter.

Egg Sauce.

Boil two or three eggs hard, then strip off the shells, take off the whites and chop up, but not too fine ; afterwards chop up the yolks in like manner ; then mix yolk and white well together, and throw the whole into good melted butter.

This sauce is particularly adapted for all kinds of salt fish, and may be eaten with a little mustard by those who are partial to the latter article.

SECTION X.

POTTING AND PICKLING FISH.

To Pot Lobster cold.

For this purpose a hen lobster is best. Mix up the spawn, coral, and the pickings about the head, and all the meat from the claws in a mortar, seasoning it with bruised mace, cayenne, and white pepper; add to this some thick melted butter 'till the whole becomes one entire paste; then take the meat from the tail and beat it up in like manner; then put one half of the last pounded meat in the bottom of the pot, and the

remainder on the top, and cover the whole with clarified butter.

To Pot Lobsters hot.

Prepare and pound the meat from the head and claws as before directed, but omitting the butter; then break up the meat from the tail in small pieces, but do not pound it; press the latter in a deep baking dish, cover it with butter, and bake it about half-an-hour. Then take it out and let it cool; and when it becomes so, turn it out into pots, spread the pounded parts on the top, and pour clarified butter over it.

To Pot Lobsters according to Mrs. Raffald's Receipt, which cost ten Guineas.

The authoress above alluded to in her edition of "the experienced English house-keeper," published in the year 1787, presents her readers with this valuable receipt; and as we do not see it copied, as by the way the greater portion of her receipts are, into the modern works on cookery, and as we believe her work to be now out of print we have taken the liberty of so doing, and presenting it to our readers for what it is now worth.

“Take” (say this experienced house-keeper) “twenty good lobsters, and when cold, pick all the meat out of the tails and claws, (be careful to take out all the black gut in the tails, which must not be used) beat fine three quarters of an ounce of mace, a small nutmeg, and four or five cloves, with pepper and salt, season the meat with it; lay a layer of butter into a deep earthen pot, then put in the lobsters and lay the rest of the butter over them, (this quantity of lobsters will take, at least, four pounds of butter to bake them) tie a paper over the pot, set them in an oven; when they are baked tender, take them out, and lay them on a dish to drain a little, then pot them close down in your potting pots, but do not break them in small pieces but lay them in as whole as you can, only splitting the tails. When you have filled your pots as full as you choose, take a spoonful or two of the red butter they were baked in, pour it on the top and set it before the fire to let it melt in, then cool it, and melt a little white wax in the remainder of the butter, and cover them.—N. B. Lay a good deal of the red hard part in the pot to bake, to colour the butter, but do not put it into the potting pans.”

By the above plan a sufficient quantity of

lobsters may be preserved, and in constant readiness for use when you are unable to procure a single fish of the kind, either for love or money.

Another mode.

Split the tail of one or two lobsters, which should be only par-boiled, and take out the black gut; butter the bottom of a baking dish and place your pieces flat in it, seasoning them with a little cayenne, allspice, nutmeg, white pepper, and salt; then placing bay leaves between each piece of lobster, cover the whole with butter, and bake them in a slow oven. When done, press down the lobster by placing another dish that fits the upper parts of the baking dish, filling the former with heavy weights, and keep this pressure on for, at least, six or eight hours; then take out the lobster, and throw away the bay leaves; and then filling your pots with it, pour clarified butter over all.

To Pot Cray Fish.

This should be done in the way as before prescribed for lobsters; with this simple difference, that, as a cray fish is sometimes

of a watery nature, the meat should be squeezed between two plates, so as to extract the water before it is put into the pots; but this will be unnecessary when they are previously baked in the way pointed out in the second receipt, which, upon the whole, we consider the preferable mode of potting fish of this kind.

To Pot Prawns and Shrimps cold.

Bruise your shrimps, and, mixing them up with a little thick melted butter, place them in pots; season with a little allspice, white pepper and salt; and pour clarified butter over the top.

Another way.

Pound your prawns in a mortar, and mix them up into a paste with a little butter; season as above, and putting the meat into a pot, cover it with clarified butter.

A third way.

Put your prawns, or rather the tails, whole and unbruised into your pots, and if there is any coral in the heads, or eggs, pick them

carefully out, taking care to clear them from the legs or shells, to which they adhere, and with these fill up all the spaces; then season as above directed, press them well down, and, covering them with butter, bake them for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in a slow oven. When perfectly cold, turn them out in the pot in which they are to make their appearance at table, and, pressing them close, cover them with clarified butter.

For this purpose the largest sized prawns, and possessing the greatest quantity of roe, are to be preferred, as the latter not only gives a more agreeable appearance, but what is still better, adds a most delicious flavour, which cannot be attained by any other means.

Charr and Trout.

Gut and scale your fish, and cut off their heads and fins; then season each fish well with pepper and a little salt and allspice; spread them open and lay them in layers with their backs uppermost in a baking dish, then pour in sufficient clarified butter to cover them, and tying paper over the dish, bake them all night in a slow oven. When cold, place a baking dish filled with heavy

weights and of a corresponding size, so as to fill the one you baked the fish in, and keep up this pressure for six or eight hours; then turn out your fish and lay them in layers in pots; pour clarified butter over them and when it becomes cold they are fit for use. If you wish to keep them for any length of time, pour melted suet over the clarified butter. By the above means the bones turn to a soft gristle, and are no impediment to eating the fish. But, at the same time, if any of your fish are above a quarter of a pound weight, it is the better plan to split those fish in halves and extract the back bone.

Another way.

Having prepared your fish as before directed, dry them in a cloth; next lay them on a board or stone and strew a quantity of salt over them, and let it remain for six or eight hours; then rub it gently off, wiping the fish afterwards carefully with a cloth; and then seasoning them with bruised mace, ground cloves, and grated nutmeg, on the inside, but with pepper, and salt only, on the outside; put them into a deep pot with their bellies uppermost, and pour in sufficient

clarified butter to cover them; bake them for five or six hours in a slow oven. When they are dressed, lay a board over them and turn them upside down, to let the gravy run from them, scrape the salt and pepper very carefully off, and season them exceedingly well both inside and out with the above seasoning; then lay them close in broad thin pots, with the backs uppermost, and cover them with clarified butter.

To Pot Salmon that has been previously dressed.

Take any portion of dressed salmon, clear it from the bones, and mash it up on a board, or pound it in a mortar; season with a little allspice, pepper, and salt; then add to it some very thick melted butter, so as to make it into a paste, but do not moisten it too much, then press it into a pot and pour clarified butter over the top. Some of the coral and spawn of a hen lobster, or portions of lobster, bruised shrimps, or prawns, are a valuable addition, and considerably enhance both the flavour and appearance.

To Pot undressed Salmon.

Having well scaled your fish, split it into cutlets, wipe them with a clean dry cloth,

but do not wash them ; then season them with cayenne, pepper, allspice, and a little salt, and lay the cutlets in layers in a baking dish with some bay leaves betwixt each layer ; then pour in clarified butter sufficient to cover the whole ; bake in rather a slow oven for about three hours, When done drain off the oil and gravy that comes from the fish, and press them in the same manner as charr and trout are done ;* then put your salmon in pots and cover it with clarified butter.

To Pot Mackerel.

Split your fish and extract the back bone. If your fish are large divide them into four parts, if small into two ; season them in the same manner as trout and charr, and, placing them in a baking dish, cover them with clarified butter, and cover the dish with paper ; bake them about two hours in an oven moderately heated, when cold press as above directed, draining off any gravy that comes from them, and then pot them according to the directions before laid down.

Basse, mullet, gurnards, perch, weevers, gar fish, pilchards, and herrings, may be potted in the same manner.

* See Ante. p. 277.

To Pot Eels.

Having skinned your eels, split them in two and take out the back bone; cut them in pieces two or three inches long; season them with a little allspice, grated nutmeg, pepper, salt, and a small quantity of dried sage rubbed very fine; place the pieces in layers in your baking dish; fill up with clarified butter, cover with paper, and bake in a tolerably quick oven for about an hour and a half. When cold take them out, press and pot them, and pour over clarified butter.

To Pot Congers.

Prepare in the same way as eels, only that instead of baking them for an hour and a half in a quick oven, the conger will require to bake for eight or ten hours in a very slow one. Press and pot them in the same way as already directed. The tail portions of a good sized conger are frequently used for potting, and this renders the slow baking process the more necessary, as by that means the numerous fine bones which that portion of the fish abounds in become dissolved to a

mere tender gristle, which, so far from being troublesome, causes the whole to eat still more agreeably.

To Pot Lampreys.

These fish may be potted in the same way as eels, but the following is the mode in which they are more usually done. The lampreys being well wiped on the outside so as thoroughly to cleanse them from the slime, and split open below the gill holes and the gristle that supplies the place of a back bone carefully extracted: they are then cut off below the gills, and the portions intended to be potted well rubbed in pepper and salt, and so allowed to remain for ten or twelve hours. They are then wiped dry, again seasoned with pepper, salt, bruised mace, and a little nutmeg, and rolled up in a fillet and put tight into a pot; sufficient clarified butter being poured in to fill up the crevices and cover the fish; paper is then tied over the pot, and they are baked for about three hours in an oven moderately heated; when nearly cold, they are slightly pressed and the gravy drained from them; and when quite cold, they are put in pots and clarified butter poured over them.

To Pickle undressed Salmon.

Scale your fish and rub him well with a dry cloth, and scrape out all the blood about the back bone, but wash him not; then cut off his head, and cut up his body into two or three pieces across; then boil your fish in equal proportions of water and vinegar, with a few cloves and blades of mace 'till it be done, taking care to skim off all the scum whilst boiling; when done, take out the fish and let that and the liquor become cold, and then add to it about one third more vinegar and throw in some whole pepper.

Trout, salmon peal, basse, mullet, and mackerel, may be pickled in the same manner.

To Pickle cold Salmon.

Boil up some portion of the water in which your salmon was dressed; add to this about the same quantity of vinegar, and throw in a few whole pepper-corns; as soon as it bubbles take it off the fire, and put in any previously cooked salmon you may wish to preserve in this way. In case your salmon should be underdone, then boil it up in the pickle 'till thoroughly dressed throughout.

Mackerel, turbot, salmon peal, trout, basse, mullet, perch, cod, ling, hake, gurnards, and indeed almost every kind of fish that are adapted for boiling may be preserved in the same manner above laid down ; but in the latter kinds of fish a few bay leaves and cloves boiled up with the pickle are a decided improvement.

To Pickle Oysters.

In opening your oysters take care to preserve their liquor ; add to this an equal quantity of vinegar, a glass of white wine, throw in a blade or two of mace, some whole peppercorns, and a little salt ; boil up this for about five minutes or so, taking care to skim off all the scum ; then put in your oysters and let them simmer very gently, for about ten minutes ; then throw them with the liquor into deep earthen pots and tie them over tight with dried bladder, white leather and paper, so as to exclude the external air.

To Pickle Muscles and Cockles.

If intended to be eaten immediately, throw in about one third of vinegar, and boil it up in the liquor that came from the muscles or cockles ; season with pepper, and a little cayenne ; let this get cold, and then throw in your muscles or cockles. If intended

to keep for a longer period, you must add three parts vinegar, in proportion to the other liquor.

To Marinade Mackerel.

Clean your mackerel thoroughly, and cut off their heads, rub into the inside plenty of bruised mace, or allspice, pepper and salt; then place them in layers in a baking dish, put bay leaves between the layers, and then pour three parts vinegar and one of water, sufficient nearly to fill the dish; throw in a little whole pepper, and a blade or two of mace; bake in a slow oven for about five hours, and when cold you may shift your fish, and the marinade in which they were cooked, and which must be eaten with them, into a better looking dish. Be careful, however, in taking up the fish, not to break or bruise them, as that will deteriorate considerably from their appearance.

Pilchards, herrings, roach, dace, small basse, perch, ruffes, gudgeons, and, in fact, every kind of fish under a pound weight may be dressed whole in this way; and one great advantage attending it is, that the bones which in many of the smaller fishes are so troublesome as to render the task of eating them extremely unpleasant, are completely dissolved by this process; added to which

many watery and insipid fishes, as the dace for instance, imbibe an agreeable flavour from the vinegar and spices they by no means possess in their own proper persons, and are thus rendered exceedingly useful, though, if prepared in any other manner, few persons could be prevailed upon to partake of them.

The larger kinds of fish as *conger*, *cod*, *hake*, *ling*, *basse*, and *mullet*, may in like manner be marinaded, being first cut up in steaks as for frying.

To Collar Eels.

Skin and gut all the eels you may require; then take out their back bones and cut off their heads; next season them well with cayenne, common pepper, salt, a little grated nutmeg, a few bruised cloves, some sage chopped fine, and a little grated lemon peel; roll them up in fillets and bind them round tight with tape; boil them in salt and water, and vinegar, equal proportions, 'till they are done. Then take out the fish, throw in some whole pepper corns, and throw your pickle into a deep dish, and when the pickle is quite cold, put the fish into it.

Lampreys, *congers*, *gar fish*, and *mackerel*, may be done in the same way.

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FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page** 39, line 11, for "genius," read "genus."
82, line 5, for "Lenciscus," read "Leuciscus."
86, line 2, for "soundness," read "roundness."
94, line 3, for "bointo," read "bonito."
99, line 12 from bottom, for "proportiosn," read "proportion."
144, top line, for "terminate," read "terminates."



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